

THE FASTING CURE

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PREFACE

This book is issued as a supplement to my *Practical Nature-Cure*. On the subject of Fasting this book will be complete in itself. But as the practice is essentially only a mode of making amends to the stomach and other overworked vital organs, there is no sense in fasting unless the person makes up his mind not to return to his old wrong ways of living, but to reform himself and live rightly ever after. The same errors in the mode of life will produce the same effects at all times. That is to say, it is not enough to be cured, it is also necessary to stay cured for the rest of one's life. That being the case, the follower needs to study and master the whole science and art of living for health and longevity, and to this end he should make a study of *Practical Nature-Cure*, which is a complete text-book and guide to the Life Natural and the cure of diseases without dependence on others—medical or non-medical.

Pudukkottai

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CHAPTER I

SOME ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

1. In the house of a rich Brahmin merchant in the little town of Davangere, near Harihar on the Tungabhadra, a buffalo-calf was sick to death. The house-people had done all they could to cure it, and had made up their minds that nothing more could be done. It occurred to one of the younger members of the family, that it was a needless cruelty to the dying animal to keep it tied up; it happened that this gentleman had some knowledge of, and faith in, Nature-Cure, but that had nothing to do with this thought of his, he ordered one of the servants to untie the calf, the man did so; but as soon as he did so, the little sufferer got up and turned to the open space, where the sun was shining, and began to walk to it with tottering steps, the servant thought that sunshine would *hasten* the death of the calf, and so he tried to prevent it by tying up the animal again; the gentleman interfered, he knew it was good for the animal to bask in the sun, he saw that the calf was simply obeying Nature's voice in doing as it did; so he forbade the man, and the calf had its freedom.

The calf now basked in the sun for some time and then returned to the shade and drank a little cold water, but took no food. This plan of self-treatment it followed for three days—basking, drinking cold water and fasting. On the fourth day it was quite cured and broke the fast.

It happened that the mistress of the house, a very old sufferer from chronic rheumatism, was then having a very similar course of treatment, which had been prescribed for her by the author, just a few days before this, there was therefore great wonder in the house, when the author next visited the house, they told him the story. They had no doubt whatever, that the little animal would have died, but for this instinctive self-cure.

"There is a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will," says the poet. And it is the wiser policy in most cases to rely on this Power, instead of struggling blindly against evils. This seems to be the case particularly in the case of disease, of which the true nature and cause are unknown and unknowable, according to one of the few honest and clear-thinking doctors of the allopathic school, namely Dr. Samuel Wilks

2. In ancient Rome there was a famous man named Cicero. His nephew, whose name

was Agricola, was suffering for many years from an intolerable pain in the stomach, which was due to an obstinate indigestion, all the medicines, which he had so far tried, had proved useless. He at last made up his mind to end his sufferings by fasting to death, he chose this way to death, because he thought he would thus punish his stomach, which he believed to be the cause of his miseries. The result however proved to him that his stomach was not to blame at all, but only himself. The fast was exactly what his stomach was wanting all the time; only he never knew it till now, the result was that not he, but his disease died, leaving him alive and well.

What happened was this. by fasting he gave the stomach, that long-suffering and much-misunderstood organ, all the rest that it needed, Nature did the rest, and he was cured.

3. In America in the last century there was a doctor named Dewey, whose name is immortal, for he was the rediscoverer of the fasting cure, which had been forgotten and lost in the course of civilisation. At first, of course, he believed in the soundness of medical teachings, he believed that drugs would cure disease, and that nourishment is necessary for sustaining the vital power in disease; how he came to renounce these beliefs, and to become

an advocate of the fasting cure and of druglessness, is bound to be an interesting story.

Let it be noted, first, that he was different from his brethren in the profession. The average medical mind is much less open to new truth than a layman's, this was the actual experience of Dr. Trall, who is a great authority, because he knew both allopathy and Nature-Cure, it cannot be said of him that he did not know the details of anatomy and physiology, he was the author of recognised text-books on these subjects

Dr. Dewey was open-minded; he was capable of unlearning what is false, and of understanding and accepting what is true, even though it be new—therefore heterodox

Once there came into his hands a patient, whose stomach was "very bad;" neither food, nor water, nor medicine would stay in it for an hour; it was all vomited soon. Another patient, who was suffering in a similar way, was in the hands of another doctor at the same time; this doctor was a blind and stupid follower of the orthodox way.

It seemed to Dr. Dewey that in this case Nature was loudly calling out that she did not want medicines, nor food. He felt that his duty was to obey Nature, not the dictates of medical orthodoxy. So he stopped both food and medicine, and contented himself with watching

the case, the patient was spared the agonies of vomiting the unwanted food and drugs. After many days the patient craved water; and then it was given and retained. In a month the stomach was so far restored by the rest given to it by this wise physician, that hunger returned, and then such food was given as the patient herself craved, and this was retained and assimilated, the patient was thus cured naturally in a month, with very little suffering.

The other patient, who was in the hands of the blind allopath, had to suffer terribly all the time she was ill, and this was three months, after all, she did not recover, but died; she would surely have had a far better chance with Dewey as her doctor.

The two parallel cases clearly showed to Dewey that medical science is wrong on these important points. Thenceforward he made it his rule not to give drugs, and not to give food unless the patient was hungry.

Dr. Dewey was not the only one to advocate the natural way. In a book on Fasting by Hereward Carrington, reference is made to numerous other professors of medicine, who fully agreed with Dr. Dewey in strongly condemning the ways of the profession.

4. A younger brother of the author lost a child of about five years—a fairly healthy darling—

by small-pox, ever since the news of this was received, the author was earnestly seeking to find the cause of this, he became anxious to know whether the death in this case was due to the disease, or some error of the parents in treating the child. At last light came, the author thought that the true cause of death in this case was, very probabaly, the failure to allow the little one to fast; later on, this was verified; the father of the patient did not know that food ought not to be given in severe acute diseases such as small-pox; so he had allowed his people to feed the child, and they had done so, in spite of the entreaties of the patient to be let alone ; it could not be said, in this case, that the disease was in its own nature fatal , the truth could be ascertained only by giving a thorough trial to fasting in the next case of small-pox that might occur

It so happened that the next case occurred in the author's own family, his youngest son, Ramachandra, then aged about three years, was laid up with severe fever, and according to the practice of the family was allowed to fast, cold water alone was given, sometimes a trace of lime-juice was added to the water; after five days it was known to be a case of small-pox; then the author took special care to see to it that the rule of fasting was strictly obeyed; as

the child did not like to have lime-juice in the water, it was omitted, and plain cold water was freely given; it was even given as often as the child could be induced to take it.

The case proved to be one of confluent small-pox, which might very easily have proved fatal in this case. Small-pox becomes fatal only if the eruptive matter is in any way obstructed in its path to the outer skin; the matter then becomes dangerous to life; it attacks the vital organs in the interior, and this leads to death; the patient dies, not because he gets small-pox, but because he does not get it enough. One source of danger is the presence of old stools in the bowel, if this be got out, the bowel will be safe; but the bowel can get rid of its encumbrance only if there be no feeding; if food be given, these old stools are retained, and the foreign matter begins to bore holes in the bowel; in this way the illness becomes fatal.

In this case, on account of the fasting, the bowel was free to move, and did move many times, with the result that all danger to life from that quarter was removed, the vital force being left free to deal with the cause of the disease, the foreign matter, it was brought to the surface, and there was a profuse formation of eruptions on the skin; indeed they were so numerous that they all joined together, forming wide

sheets of pus, which made it confluent small-pox. After about ten days in all, the eruptions were all out and matured, and the disease began to abate. Until the crisis had definitely passed, the child never asked for food; water was given as often as he could be made to take it.

When the crisis was safely passed, the child began to ask for food, and to get it, once a day; the first day he demanded the water of a tender cocoanut, and this was given, the second day he wanted buttermilk, and this was given; the third day he craved a little cold raw milk, which was given; it may be said, in explanation, that it is customary in the family to take milk raw, that is, without heating it, as required by the law of Nature-Cure, on the fourth day the child wanted milk and rice, which was given; up to this time food was given only once daily; in this way the patient regulated his own diet and recovered.

In our country it is well understood that in small-pox the internal organs must be kept cool, so as to ward off all chance of internal complications, but it is not known that the only *scientific* way to keep the inside cool is to stop feeding altogether; it is not known that food cannot but heat the inside, and thus lead to the dreaded internal complications.

5. In the city of Madras a prosperous man of business was suffering from a disease for which the doctors could not find a name, as was stated by one of them, it was a defect of the nervous system, which caused a queer sensation in the feet. For four years he was in the hands of the allopathic doctors; the best doctors available in that place treated him without any benefit; during this time he had received about a hundred injections, he had also been subjected to all the new-fangled treatments—electric and otherwise—for which very costly fittings and arrangements have been made in the general hospital, the chief institution of its kind in the whole province. At last the doctors gave him up, and by the advice of some friends he began a course of Nature-Cure. He had read some books on fasting in his own vernacular and wanted to try a fast, he sent for the author and asked him about it, the author found that he was far more heavy below the waist than above it; it was also evident that his case was altogether chronic, on account of the heavy load of drug-poison he was carrying and because of the position of the disease-matter in the body; he was therefore not in a slate to begin a fast right off, the disease-matter had descended below the waist, and it could not, by any means other than fasting, be made to

re-ascend, so as to be eliminated from the body to prepare him for the fasting-cure, it was necessary to put him on a curative diet for some months to begin with, as he was already a believer in Louis Kuhne's water-cure system, he was given a prescription somewhat according to that system; his diet was somewhat strictly regulated, and he also took baths to help the elimination of the foreign matter, in this way he obtained a little reduction of weight, and some of the foreign matter in his body was also removed. There were also accumulations of old stools in his bowel, which were as yet untouched.

After about four months of this preparatory course, he began a fast of thirty-two days under the personal supervision of the author, of course he was drinking water all the time; he took it in small doses as often as possible; to help out the old stools he took enemas of a non-violent kind once every other day; they brought out hardened masses of stool, which sank in the water, showing that they were old stools, fresh stools would float on water.

At the end of the fast he had lost about forty pounds more of his weight; his general health was vastly improved, and the particular trouble, for the cure of which he came to the fasting-cure, was, as he put it, three-quarters cured; he was

satisfied with the results so far attained, and proposed to fast again later on, if he did not get complete relief by mere regulation of diet. In this case the cure was severely handicapped by the long period of unnatural treatments by the professors of the allopathic school.

6. In the very first case of consumption treated by the author the patient was found to be having fever. At that time the author had no definite plan for the treatment of consumptives. However it seemed that fasting for a short period would be a good beginning for the cure. So the patient was taken to the top of the house and was kept there for some days. She fasted completely for three days, and this caused the fever to abate and produced natural hunger. During the fast achamana doses of cold water were given frequently. There was also plenty of sunlight and open air. The patient was in the sun most of the time, going under shelter only for a few hours from about noon. After the fever left she began to demand food. At first only cocoanut water or orange juice was given sparingly. After some days on this diet raw cold milk was given twice a day for some days. Later still, when the appetite had become normal she was given a little Sattvik Iddali once and the raw milk at another time. The patient by this time seemed outwardly cured. Her

physical strength returned and she was able to do house-work. But the cure was only superficial and a long course of low and highly positive dieting and other natural measures was necessary to confirm the cure, and the patient was warned against relapsing to the old ways in eating until she should put on flesh again—she was very thin at the time—and became quite normal again. But she got out of hand and began to eat wrong food, and when this was detected the author ceased to look after her. Some months after this she became ill again and after a few months of illness died from the disease. The patient might be alive now if she had adhered strictly to the course of abstemious dieting that had been prescribed.

7. A consumptive lady, who was already very thin, was treated and radically cured in nearly the same way; for about six months her diet was confined to fruit or buttermilk; afterwards she fasted absolutely for twelve days.

A number of other cases of consumption have been radically and permanently cured by the adoption of a plan of dieting, which was as near an approach to fasting as possible. The principles underlying the plan of cure are Vital Economy and Positive Dieting. A faithful observance of these two principles would

ensure a cure in every case where the destruction of the vital organs has not gone too far.

The consumptive is as a rule not fit for fasting, except for very short periods, in the beginning to start the cure, and afterwards at intervals. Vital Economy is the purpose of fasting, and this can be secured in a non-violent way by the minimum of food, which should be selected with a view to its *positive* quality. Juices of herbs or raw tender vegetables, diluted with water or thin buttermilk should be given on an empty stomach—after several hours of fasting—once every day. Vegetable soups, dilute fruit-juices or tender coconut water should be given another time and a teacupful of goat's milk or of cow's milk with a little herbal juice added a third time.

8. Here may be mentioned the fast of thirty five days the author went through in 1932, which is narrated in Practical Nature-Cure, chapter X. The fast prevented the crisis from proving fatal the vital powers could not have been maintained at a safe level in any other way, because the digestive powers had disappeared. Good health returned through careful gradualness in dieting afterwards.

A number of other examples are given in Practical Nature-Cure.

Let the reader think on these facts, which are here given only as samples of what can be done by the fasting cure in a great variety of cases. It is a matter of everyday experience among the followers of our system, that diseases, which have only been worsened by the doctors of the medical school, yield at last to the curative virtue of the Supreme Medicine, namely Fasting.

Do not these cases powerfully suggest to the reader the thought that in some mysterious way food nourishes the disease, instead of nourishing the man? How else can we explain the fact, which has been verified in every possible case, that feeding only prolongs the disease, and makes it more difficult to cure even by Nature-Cure?

The practice of the medical profession always proceeds on the belief that food is the source of vital power for the cure of disease; on the other hand Nature-Cure proceeds uniformly on the principle that food always nourishes the disease. Of these two beliefs, the latter is the one which agrees with facts: the former is by no means justified by facts. And yet it is claimed that allopathic medicine is a science!

We shall now examine the scientific reasons for the fasting cure.

CHAPTER II

SCIENCE AND FASTING

What is science? It is right knowledge of *actual* human experience,—nothing more, nor less. First we must gain experience, and then reason about it, thus we understand the hidden truths of Nature. Is not this so?

This means that the *true* scientist is one who keeps an open mind, till he has experience, namely facts, to reason about; he takes particular care not to leave out of consideration *any* fact that is related to the subject, *then* he begins to theorise. One who begins to theorise before he has collected all the facts is not a true scientist; his theories are *not* scientific, they are called *premature*.

In medical science it is taught that food is the source of strength and even of life itself. Let us examine this in the light of the facts, of which samples were given in the first chapter.

The most infallible test of any theory is the goodness or badness of the results, which are reaped by following out the theory in actual practice.

On this theory is based the medical practice of dieting the sick until they die or recover. If food be the source of vital power, then it would sustain *all* vital functions equally, the

function called digestion can be kept up by food alone, and that being so, a patient who is fed must be able to digest the food, and get over the disease at the same time, there must be no antagonism between digestion and cure of disease; the two functions the ordinary and the extraordinary, must go on side by side, each helping the other, on the other hand, wherever the patient denies himself, or is denied, food, there the cure must be impossible in most cases and difficult in all, and there must be a very large percentage of deaths.

A theory must be proved both positively and negatively, where the theory is followed, the results must be good; where the theory is set at naught, they must be bad.

In the foregoing chapter it was shown that fasting is far from being a handicap to Nature in the cure of diseases, all diseases, however unlike in their symptoms and in name, cure themselves with ease, and within a comparatively shorter time, if food is withheld, than if food is given. We shall cite here the evidence of some doctors, who have had experience of *both* ways.

Dr. Dewey's name has been mentioned; his words are entitled to great weight, because he followed the ways of his brethren at first for many years, and then changed his ways, and followed the natural way—the way of Nature.

Cure—for the rest of his life; in the beginning he had but a dim understanding of the rationale of the new way; he only felt that Nature's voice must be obeyed, especially as no medical man can be confident either way, unless he sees how Nature works, he believed that it would be safer to follow Nature than to follow blindly the teachings of so-called medical science; and he was willing to be guided by the actual results—to be instructed by Nature Herself; he had the gift of open mindedness.

Dr. Dewey is emphatic on the gross *unwisdom* of giving food to a bed-ridden patient. He points out that the state of the digestive organs, namely the mouth, the stomach and those that come after them, are by no means in a fit condition to digest the food, Nature does not make any use of the food so anxiously and religiously given; where a bed-ridden patient is fed according to medical custom, he loses flesh and becomes lean in the course of the illness, just like one who is not fed at all, the food does not avail to prevent the loss of flesh. But that is not all; every bit of food is a tax on vitality; it takes away the vital energy needed for the cure of the disease, on the other hand energy is saved, and made available for the cure, if food is withheld, and this saving may make all the difference between life and death.

nearly every sick man, who fasts, recovers, only those die, whose lives *cannot* be saved by human skill and prudence, because their vital organs are already so far gone, that death is inevitable, among those who are fed, the mortality is disproportionately large, the illness itself is prolonged, sometimes to a period running beyond twelve months, the sufferings of the patient are also far greater during the time of illness, if by chance the patient recovers, he does so with greatly impaired health.

The author has observed that illnesses, which are *medically* cured, are not really cured, there is often a relapse, or even many relapses, where the disease itself seems to be cured, there are other evil effects, which they call "after-effects" They are simply the uncured disease, transformed by the unnatural treatment! These effects are an ample proof that medical treatment does harm instead of good. Where there are no clear after-effects, there are still defects of health, which are more inward than outward; these are the seeds of future disease, and for the sowing of these seeds the doctor is to blame—not the disease, as both doctors and patients often suppose.

Dr. Page is another witness, whose competency cannot be questioned He wrote a book, "The Natural Cure of Consumption and other

diseases," in which he has shown the mischievousness of feeding the sick.

Dr Keith is quoted as saying: "There is no doubt that a simple and short case is converted into a severe and long one by the feeding of the sick."

Numerous other authorities can be cited, to show that the medical practice of feeding the sick is wrong, and is responsible, in great part, for the great mortality among doctor-treated patients. But as the facts can be verified by the reader himself, if he cares, there is no need to swell this book with quotations.

The practice of feeding the sick is a recent one; the ancient practice was different. Hippocrates, a doctor of ancient Greece, said that the more sick the body is, the more it is hurt by feeding, in this he was at one with the ancients of this country.

How did this medical superstition—the belief in food as a source of strength for the sick—come into being?

The answer seems to be this. The doctors of past ages believed in fasting, but they also believed in poisonous drugs, in bloodlettings and other violent and more or less false remedies, they were also ignorant of the value of pure and fresh air, of sunlight, and of the use of water. Hence medicine became a bye-word.

of reproach. Then feeding the sick was thought of as a reform which might save the credit of the profession. The fact is, Mother Nature demands not only the stoppage of food, but also freedom to cure disease in Her own way, drugs must be avoided, also, because they hinder the healing work of Nature

A truly scientific understanding of the relation between food and life will be one that takes account of these facts. Such a theory will be given and explained in the chapter on the Philosophy of Fasting. Meanwhile the reader will take to heart this saying If science cannot fit in with the actual facts, so much the worse for the science, such science is not true science but pseudo-science, and such is medical science, because it ignores the vast mass of evidence that there is on the subject of fasting.

Dr. Dewey cites from a physiologist named Dr. Yeo details of the loss in weight during a long fast of different parts of the body, which go to show that there is some mysterious Power behind the vital processes, which knows how to take care of the body. It is seen that the loss of weight is not the same for all the different tissues of the body, some are sacrificed, or rather got rid of, others lose a little, and some nothing at all, among those that lose no weight, even in a long

fast, is the brain. This makes it possible for the body to be rebuilt on better lines after a long fast. This also explains the fact that fasting is after all not dangerous to life, unless it happens that the patient is unfitted for fasting by some special defect of his constitution. In any case moderate fasting is safe.

This branch of Nature-Cure is the one which makes it possible to cure chronic diseases, which are otherwise incurable. Thus Nature-Cure is the *swiftest* cure there is, for diseases of all kinds. It is often said in a thoughtless way that Nature-Cure is slow. A cure is slow or swift, only in comparison to some method, which is equally efficacious in the same kind of case. How does the comparison stand here?

In an acute case, allopathy takes, generally much more time, not to cure the disease, but to suppress it. Nature-Cure cures it radically, and it takes decidedly less time. In such cases the reproach is simply foolish.

In chronic cases, Nature-Cure takes time, indeed, but it cures the disease radically, which allopathy never does. Hence it is unfair to compare the two systems. Nature-Cure enjoys an undisputed and indisputable supremacy in this class of cases. To call it swift, or slow, is equally meaningless, since it is the *only* available cure.

CHAPTER III. FASTING IN ANCIENT INDIA

In India there is a proverb, which has come down from the most ancient times, that Fasting is the Supreme Medicine. The antiquity of this teaching may be inferred from the fact that we are unable to trace the author of it.

It was recognised in those days, that fasting is of twofold value—as a hygienic practice, and as a religious observance. Fasts were prescribed in the sacred books, as a means of purification of body and mind. And long fasts—up to a month even—were actually undertaken. These have survived to this day among the Jains, whose religion gives a very high place to asceticism. The law-givers of ancient times also invented a discipline more trying than fasting, pure and simple—an observance known as the Chandra-yana in which the food eaten was to be just sixteen mouthfuls to begin with, then to become less by one mouthful each day, until it was reduced to one mouthful, then to be increased day by day up to sixteen mouthfuls, and only one meal a day was allowed.

The modern dread of fasting seems to have been quite unknown to the ancients. They knew that fasting—whether in health or in sickness—is by no means dangerous to life or health.

Why is it that life does not depart when a man fasts for fifteen days? What is it that sustains life meanwhile? And what is the place and office of food? These questions are answered thus in the Chhandogya Upanishad. During a long fast, water sustains life, because life is of the same nature as water—not the visible water that chemistry can deal with and analyse, but a super-chemical essence, which water brings to us. As to food, its office is chiefly to maintain the mind—not the gross, visible food, which alone is known to science, but a super-chemical essence, which is in the food. Because of this dependence of the mind upon food, memory and other mental functions are weakened during a long fast. Because life demands the superfine essence of water for its sustenance, it is necessary for a faster to be drinking water often; so long as he does that life will not leave his body; but if he fails to take water, his life may be in danger. The relevant passages are given in an appendix.

In this ancient book there is another very practical rule about fasting; it is pointed out that the power of digestion is reduced to a low ebb during a fast, so that only a very *small* ration of *light* food can be borne when breaking the fast; and the ration, as well as the quality of food, must be *gradually* altered, as the power

increases. It may here be stated that the breaking of a fast is a very difficult matter, it demands great care and self-control, as will be seen in a later chapter.

In the ancient books of medicine also, fasting is recognised as imperative for the cure of disease. The notion that food is strength, and *must* be given to the sick, is a purely modern superstition, which European doctors brought to this country. It is some satisfaction to the followers of Nature-cure in our land, that this superstition is not a home-grown article, but imported from abroad.

CHAPTER IV THE PHILOSOPHY OF FASTING

When Science has collected all the facts and arranged them, Philosophy comes in, to explain them and make them useful for life. It is now plain to the reader that Fasting is the most *practical* method of preserving Health, and of curing disease. We shall now try to understand why.

Both Health and Disease are states of the living body. Hence we need to know what there is to know about Life and its relation to the body.

Without life to begin with, there can be no body ; this begins as a very small live particle inside another living body. It is the life that makes it into an independent body with all organs complete.

Life is still an unknown thing for scientists ; their ignorance is inevitable, because life belongs to a different world altogether ; life is not something belonging to the visible world , the effects of life can be studied, but life itself is beyond the scope of physical and chemical science. But this does not in the least justify the atheistic dogmas which are deeply cherished by 'scientists', they have no right to say that, because they cannot get hold of life and interrogate it, as they can get hold of and interrogate a sample of earth, therefore life has no independent existence, that is a *negative reason* ; according to Sir Oliver Lodge* a negative reason is not a reason at all

The so-called scientific mentality is a deplorable thing , it is a defect of mind not a kind of mental perfection, where things invisible are concerned As the Gita says

उत्कामन्तं स्थितं वापि मुजाने वा गुणान्वितम् ।
विसृद्धा नानुपद्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥

" The deluded ones do not see, but those of enlightened minds to see, the indwelling

* Sir Oliver Lodge was a scientist of great eminence, yet not an infidel

Spirit, as He departs, or while He animates a body, enjoying life through the organs". The average man has his mind turned outward because his sense-organs are his only means of knowledge; scientists are no better in this respect than other man.

परांचि खानि व्यतृणत् स्थांभुः ।

तस्मात् पराह् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ॥

"The Self-Existent One made the sense-organs open outwards, hence man looks without, not within himself, at the Spirit" Those who have outgrown this 'scientific' mentality, and looked within, are aware that there are other worlds than ours, and a Supreme Spirit, innermost of all.

Life may be compared to electric power, and the body to a machine which is operated by that power. As the machine does not produce that power, so too the body does *not* produce Life, again, as the machine is only a tool by which electric power does its work, so too the body is only a tool by which *life* does its work*.

Even the vital *heat*, by which the living body is maintained, is a product of life; the energy of life, passing along the nerves, warms them, and the rest of the body too. This is the

* An elaborate discussion of the relation between life and the body will be found in the second Chapter of Practical Nature Cure, by the author.

sole reason why fasters keep up their body-heat during a long fast: and this is the case even during the period when little or no weight is lost,—the last days of a very long fast.

The body is both a house and a workshop which Life builds for itself. But whether the house is built right or wrong depends on the kind of building material the life gets. This building material is fivefold. It consists of five kinds of substance which are called Ether, Air, Light, Water and Food; the last alone is *called* food; but *all the five* are food, strictly speaking. These five substances are not exactly identical with the things known to us by these names, but powers of Nature, which are much more subtle than the latter; these last are the product of those forces of creation*.

The most interesting principle about this fivefold food is this. these five are needful for life and health in a certain order, the finest of all, namely Ether, is the most valuable for life; the grossest of all, namely so-called food—earthy food—is the least valuable of all, the foundation is Ether, and the rest are supported by it, in the same way, each one of the other four is supported by those that are finer than itself. But under the sway of purblind science the earthy element

* This fivefold substance is described in more detail in Practical Nature Cure

is treated as all in all, and all the others are more or less neglected, thus life is turned topsy-turvy, and all possible mistakes are made, leading to chronic disease, unhappiness and premature death.

The Ether-Power comes by fasting and other ways of *resting* life. Breathing, basking, bathing (or drinking) and eating are the means for obtaining the other four. Disease is cured by making good the deficiencies in the four *higher* foods. Thus fasting is the highest of all the means of curing disease. Over and above even the Ether-Power is the Primal Root of all powers, the power of the Spirit—the Atma-Shakti—which is freely supplied to those who possess Mental Health.

Health depends on two things, namely the Vital Force and the right structure of the body including all the organs and especially the blood and the nervous system. The former needs to be maintained at its highest possible level by the practice of Vital Economy the subject of Chapter V of the text book. The latter can be preserved or restored only by Positive Food, the subject of Chapter VI of the same. It may need to be noted here that a degree of selfdenial in the matter of sex also is necessary for Vital Economy, since there is a tremendous loss of vital power by that kind of

indulgence, this is dealt with in the text book under the title of Brahmacharya (Continence.)

The Life Natural is little more than the faithful observance of these two great laws of Health. The effect of this right living is to maintain bodily purity and lightness, which is fitness for work and life, and mental clarity and power. When these laws are set at naught there are arrears of those vital labours which, as explained in the text book, are denied their share of the vital energy needed for their efficient performance. These vital labours are those of elimination, by which the purity and efficiency of the bodily structures are maintained. The body becomes foul and feels heavy, though there may not be a corresponding increase of weight. It is the need for clearing off these arrears of elimination that starts Nature on the special efforts towards restoration of Health, which the doctors and their patients call diseases. These special efforts need the application of the same principles—Vital Economy and positive dieting—but in a different way.

Vital Economy including Fasting, which becomes necessary where practically all the vital power that is available is needed for the renovation of health, whereby cure of otherwise incurable diseases will be reached. Common

experience tells us that where diseases are either seriously acute or chronic, it is foolish to expect a cure if the medical way is followed, because in the first place the vital efforts towards a real cure are deliberately countered by the use of heavy doses of poisonous drugs repeated frequently and over a long time, and because food is given with a view to replace the flesh that is being lost and to 'keep up vitality'; really the food serves only to squander the vital power, until the Life departs, or gives up its efforts to recover health. The food that is given, also, never supplies the medicinal substances that Nature can make use of in the breaking down and elimination of the foreign matter, because the food is entirely negative; it never occurs to a medical man to order herbal juice or vegetable soup; for these are not 'nourishing', like meat-soup or milk. It is ridiculous to give nourishing food to a patient whose digestive organs are for the time being disabled and need rest for recuperation.

It must be taken to heart by the follower that it is not even the fivefold medicine that cures him, but his own Vital Force, and that this force is limited by his constitution, and needs to be economised, so as to enable it to achieve success in its efforts to restore health. It is for this reason that fasting is necessary in

some cases, and a close approach to it in others. During the periods of regular eating the vital labours of assimilation consume all the vital energy left over after the voluntary activities of the man, which, because of the power of his will over his nervous system, have precedence over all the involuntary functions. The breathing, the flow of the blood and even the work of the bowels and the excretory organs are all slowed down and some of them even suspended, because of the intense preoccupation of the mind in work of some kind. Rest by cessation of all these labours, the voluntary and some of the involuntary ones, especially the vital processes started by eating, becomes necessary when the immediate problem is repair and cure of disease. This is Nature's reason for so weakening the patient that he has to take to his bed and remain there for sometime. This is also the reason for fasting. If eating be suspended or at least greatly reduced, all this energy is saved and becomes available for cure by elimination and reconstruction. In this way the arrears of elimination are cleared away in a comparatively short time, and the diseases due to these arrears naturally cease.

This is the *rationale* of fasting. This explains how the most obstinate diseases, which have before defied the skill and resources of the

doctors, yield in a miraculously short time to fasting.

The more the foreign matter in the body, the greater the danger to life. Hence the quickest means to its elimination is often the safest possible. Hence fasting is the safest remedy there is, notwithstanding its strangeness to civilised minds. We shall now state and answer the common objections to the fasting-cure. The following are the objections commonly raised:

1. That fasting may prove dangerous to life;
2. That fasting weakens the body and often brings on sickness or disease-symptoms,
3. That fasting makes one lean; that for this reason lean people cannot fast;
4. That, in fasting, the gastric juice will eat up the inside of the stomach, because there is no food for it to act upon.

THE FIRST OBJECTION

The actual cases of fasting for many weeks at one stretch, even by very lean ones, ought to be an ample answer to this objection—as well as to the other ones.

The objector confounds fasting with *starvation* and the observed effects of *forcible*

starvation on animals are given as evidence against the fasting cure. But there is a vast difference between the two. Fasting is a voluntary act; it implies fearlessness and the will to give rest to the overworked digestive organs. A man or animal starves because he is forcibly deprived of food; he is usually in fear of evil consequences, in any case his mind is discontented and brooding over his misfortune.

The cases of ship-wrecked sailors are also cited by the objectors. But these cases are not rightly understood by them. The fact is, in the first few weeks, the men are not really in any danger to life or health. In fact, according to the evidence of Mark Twain, a famous American author, there is great benefit to health during this period, sailors, who had been bed-ridden for months with some persistent disease, lose their troubles as if by magic. It is only if the privation of food continues for more than three weeks, that serious consequences follow, and these are due to two causes—the deprivation of good drinking water, and the fear of death by starvation, if a timely rescue does not come. Fasting does not involve the giving up of water.

The faster for health is expected to understand the reason for fasting, and to undertake the fast with a *clean* mind. He must know that by fasting he will eliminate foreign matter; he

must also know that some slight and occasional suffering is likely to attend the process of elimination, and should not be frightened by it. Such a one does not starve, but fasts. And he is free to fast as long as his mind is favourable, and to suspend fasting—to be resumed at a later time if needful—in case he thinks he has fasted enough for the time being. So fasting is *not* the same thing as starving.

It is true that fasting may bring out *latent* diseases, but this is rather a reason *for* fasting. The author was once taken to see a Jain, who had been fasting for many weeks, the facts of the case were thus, the man had previously had an attack of paralysis, which had been temporarily suppressed by drugs by an allopathic doctor, during the fast the drug-poison was eliminated, and the paralysis was restored. The patient, however, did not want to renounce allopathy; so there was nothing to be done for him. If he had consented to give up that system, he could have got a radical cure of the disease by natural means, the disease would have spent itself under Nature-cure.

The objection is however not without some basis in truth. It does *not* apply to fasting in acute diseases, nor for limited periods in accordance with the practical instructions given here. But it has some validity in regard to very

long fasts, which might be undertaken prematurely, without due regard to the fitness of the patient for such long fasting, or without sufficient preparation by way of positive dieting to effect a change in the substance of the tissues, as Dr. Lindlahr has explained. It will be shown later that as a rule fasting is in order when Nature gives a clear indication, as by a curative crisis. At other times only short fasts are advisable. If long fasts are undertaken and persisted in—in accordance with the teaching of the older school—it may have the effect of stirring up more of the foreign matter than the vital force would be able to deal with and eliminate safely. This stirring up would mean a premature crisis, which might prove fatal or at least serious enough to become fatal unless treated with special care. A crisis that arises naturally, due to a non-violent plan of treatment being followed, would be a *curative* crisis and would be safe under Nature. Such a crisis may and should come at a later stage in the progress of the constitution backwards to Health. To provoke it in advance by injudicious fasting would be to bring it up in a dangerous form, that is, as a destructive crisis. This is why professors of our system advise people to fast only under expert supervision. But if the 'expert' happens to be a mere mechanician, and not a master of

the mysteries of the science, of the philosophical principles whose correct application ensures both safety and success, the patient may be made to persist in the fast when he ought to suspend it and take to curative dieting. Sometimes it happens that the speed of the cure has to be slowed by suitable devices, such as the addition of some negative food to the diet, which on the whole has to be positive. The best way will be for the follower to become himself an expert in fasting and this he can do by the practice of progressive fasting which will be explained later.

THE SECOND OBJECTION

The weakness, that is felt during a fast, is more apparent than real, it is more pronounced in the case of those who have lived unnaturally and who did not prepare themselves for fasting by a course of *cleansing* diet. The reason for the weakness is that all the available vital energy is needed to carry on the work of elimination, so the energy available for locomotion is much less than usual; the proper remedy is to lie in bed and take perfect rest.

That this weakness is not real is conclusively proved by the fact, that a faster needs less sleep than usual. Hereward Carrington mentions a case, where the faster remained perfectly

awake for twenty-one days, without any evil effects. It is the habit of eating in excess of the vital need, that makes sleep necessary. The abstemious eater needs very little sleep.

The weakness that is felt by a faster is compared by Dr. Robert Walter to the weakness that attends sleep; it is a seeming weakness during which the man's vital powers recuperate: the man is made weak in order to be made strong again and hence the weakness is not a reason for not fasting.

Not alone the feeling of weakness, but other uncomfortable sensations also are likely to arise during a fast; they may come and go, one after another, at intervals. All these are the necessary accompaniments of the stirring up of the foreign matter—preparatory to its expulsion—and should be cheerfully put up with, till they pass away; they *would* pass away naturally; in most cases an enema or two, or a drink of water with a little juice of lime or sour orange, or a hot foot-bath along with a cooling hip-bath, would help to dissipate the trouble; often an exposure of the face to the cool air in an open place would be a good remedy.

It has been already mentioned, that sleeplessness may occur, and that it is not a serious matter.

THE THIRD OBJECTION

People also hesitate to fast, for fear of losing weight. The fact is, the flesh, which is lost in fasting for a cure, or for health, is mostly sick flesh, and must be got rid of, to make room for good flesh—to be built up from good food, eaten in the right way, after the fast is broken. This is the case in acute and chronic cases alike.

In acute cases, it has been proved by Dr. Dewey and others, that the loss of flesh is *inevitable*, it is never prevented by the most anxious and systematic feeding. And we have shown that feeding makes the illness positively dangerous.

In a chronic case feeding does not really do any good, though it may help to keep up the body-weight. At one time medical views on weight seemed to be about to change, chiefly on the evidence of insurance statistics. Dr. Leonard Williams wrote a book criticising the medical standards of weight. But orthodoxy has remained firm on this as on other points.

The very presence of chronic disease proves that the flesh is not healthy flesh; it is all made up of sick cells, if these are allowed to propagate, they would reproduce their own kind—*sick cells*,—without end; and it will be

plain to the sensible reader, that sick cells are a burden, a source of weakness, not a source of strength. On the other hand, it is a positive gain to get rid of them, and to build up healthy cells in their place. As Dr. Dewey remarks, Nature somehow takes care to keep intact, more or less, those organs, on which the continuance of life depends; the brain and nerves lose no weight at all, and the heart very little, in a very long fast; this fact is corroborated by modern physiologists also. Thus a loss of weight by timely and judicious fasting is the loss of a loss, of a *drag* on Nature's healing power; such a loss, as also losses through reform of eating habits, are attended with positive gains in health, either latent or patent.

The second part of the objection—about fasting for lean men—is usually set out thus: fat men can fast with safety, because the fat they have accumulated before the fast sustains life during the fast; fat is supposed to be a biological famine-insurance reserve; but a lean man has no such reserve, so he will be living on the other tissues of his body if he fasts, this must be dangerous; this is the objector's case. Dr. Graham (quoted by H. Carrington) answers thus:

"If the fat be designed for the nourishment of the body during prolonged fasts, etc., then,

If a very fat man, in the enjoyment of what is ordinarily considered good health, and a lean man in good health be shut up together, the fat man ought to lose weight much more slowly, and to live considerably longer, than the lean man, but directly the contrary of this is true. The lean man will lose in weight much more slowly, and will live several days longer, than the fat man, in spite of all the nourishment which the latter may derive from his adipose deposits."

The truth is, fat is mostly foreign matter, it is simply one of the end-products of unwanted protein, which the vital energies have not been able to burn up completely, the protein is imperfectly oxidised, and the residue is fat, which deranges the vital structures and causes disease.

The medical view, that when one is fasting he is living on his own flesh, does not fit the facts. During the last days of a long fast there is very little loss of weight—not enough to account for the vital energy that is being spent from day to day. The truth is that the flesh is being got rid of, because it is sick flesh, and is a hindrance to the recovery of health. Sick flesh, if allowed to remain, and sought to be increased by feeding, will only propagate its own kind, and there will be an increase of diseasedness and not a cure. Nature wants to remove the sick flesh to make room for the

healthy flesh which could be built in, after the foreign matter is eliminated, from healthy food. In any case this objection applies only to the complete fast, which is not to be undertaken lightly, and which is as a rule unnecessary.

Another interesting fact is that there is little or no loss of weight during the *last* days of a complete fast; the loss of flesh is rapid only while there is sick flesh to be broken up and got rid of. A complete fast is one which is carried out until all sick flesh is fully got rid of, after which natural hunger will return. But no one need take to a complete fast, unless and until he is mentally and constitutionally ready for it, hence this objection need not terrify anybody, clear instructions are given in the proper place.

THE FOURTH OBJECTION

This is more or less out of date, in the old books on physiology it was stated that gastric juice would be secreted in the stomach at the regular hour for meals, in advance of the meals, it is now known that this does not happen; the stomach begins to secrete its digestive juice only when stimulated by the food, it is stated that well-insalivated food excites the flow of gastric juice of the right sort, in fasting no digestive juice is secreted, what is secreted is a viscous substance, which is foreign matter

needing to be *eliminated*, this does not act upon the lining of the stomach, it is easily washed away by drinks of water.

WHAT FASTING CAN DO

All distrust of fasting is simply irrational. It would wear away on closer acquaintance, and in its place would arise a perfect trust, based on intimate knowledge of the rewards of *judicious* fasting; the reader will note the use of the word, '*judicious*'.

By fasting one outgrows and forgets his unnatural cravings and habits. These are not to be shaken off by mere will-power—by fighting against them; so long as the nerves and nerve-centres are foul with the foreign matter, the man *must* remain a slave to cravings; by satisfying them from time to time he is able to enjoy some temporary ease and comfort; this foulness of the nervous system can be got rid of by fasting alone. In this way fasting helps to refine and invigorate the mind, thereby making it an apt tool for the spiritual life. When the brain becomes pure, it becomes possible for one to practise *meditation*,—to enter on the *inward* quest of the Truth of Life, which is the last enterprise of the *yogi*—the seeker of Perfection.

Fasting is also the one and only rational way to the renewal of youth; the so-called

processes of 'rejuvenation,' which are now much advertised, are on their face unnatural; there is not enough *disinterested* evidence to prove that these are at all satisfactory.

If by fasting one makes amends to the stomach for the continual denial of rest, which is its due, that organ recovers its original soundness. But this will now be manifest as much by the refusal of the stomach to put up with injustice, as by its ability to do its due share of work. A slavish, uncomplaining stomach is by no means a healthy one; it is distended; it submits to being heavily overloaded, so that it is stretched to an unnatural thinness and weakness. The rejuvenated stomach is *normal* in size; it has thick, strong coats of muscle, it refuses to submit to the injustice of gluttonous eating—hence the inability to eat recklessly as before—a good thing for the owner of the stomach, if he is wise enough to profit by it; a stomach that has a voice of its own, and insists on being consulted where it is concerned, is one to be proud of; ignorant people are proud of the other kind of stomach—the slavish stomach, which does not protest against abuse.

It is not claimed for the fasting cure that it will cure every patient, but, considering that

this remedy is postponed to all possible allopathic remedies,—good, bad and indifferent,—it is bare justice to say that it cures a great many cases which have been brought to an incurable stage by allopathic bungling, and that it would cure *all* such cases, if only the allopaths be wise and honest enough to acknowledge defeat before the case becomes too bad for a natural cure. It is an unnatural state of things that men should be encouraged to pursue all possible unnatural remedies in the early and middle stages of their disease ignoring the only remedy that Nature prescribes

But even in the hopeless cases,—in which the patient is foredoomed to die—fasting does good, as Dr. Dewey says; it greatly lightens his sufferings, there are no "agonies of death," in the case of the patient, who chooses to die in the lap of Mother Nature, nor does the patient lose his consciousness, which is always the result of unnatural feeding or drugging; the dying man who is allowed to fast is able to make a legally valid will up to the last moment. There is reason to believe, also, that fasting makes the conditions easier for the departing soul in the world to which he is taken after he is disentangled from his earthly body by the process called death.

An intense faith in fasting, based on the knowledge of this rationale of fasting, is the chief qualification for one who undertakes a long fast for any purpose, except the cure of acute disease. The author also believes that worldly minded men,—the covetous and deceitful ones, who love gold more than their fellow-men—ought not to undertake long fasts; for fasting is in the main an act of the mind, and a pure and cheerful mind is necessary for one who undertakes to go without the customary food-stimulation for more than three days, to begin with, else he is likely to suffer much, either during the fast, or after breaking it, or both. The true essence of fasting is revealed by the Sanskrit name of it, "upavasa," this means dwelling close to God, whoever is incapable of this is as a rule covetous and deceitful, and is therefore unfit to fast, except for short periods, or in acute disease.

The average man thinks of the laboratory scientist as a great authority, because he does not know what a sorry creature he really is—that he is just a frog in a well. If he studies fasting, he does it in a professional faster, who fasts for a fee, and not in those who fast for hygienic or other personal reasons—for health or cure or for spiritual regeneration. The professional faster, again, is put into an abnormal

state for the sake of 'scientific' observation. And no scientist studies more than one or two cases. The knowledge so obtained is of no value.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRACTICE OF FASTING IN ACUTE CASES

Diseases are of two kinds, mainly: those in which foreign matter is being actively eliminated, and those in which there is little or no elimination, the former are known as *acute* diseases, the latter are known as *chronic* diseases. The latter become curable chiefly by being changed into acute disease. The former are themselves the cure; they are self-limited, and would pass away soon, leaving a legacy of improved health for the patient, *if he be one that follows Nature's Law of Druglessness.*

To distinguish whether a case is acute or chronic is all the diagnosis that is needed in the practice of Nature Cure. It is not necessary to make further distinctions; the process of giving a name to the disease after studying the symptoms and making a detailed examination of the body in the ways known to allopaths is absolutely unnecessary, as well as misleading.

The follower must therefore be able to class a case as acute or chronic. And this is all he has to do. If he does this, he is at once ready to begin a cure. There is here no separate cure for every kind of disease, as there is in other systems; ignorant persons want to know what should be done in this or that particular case; they even make it a grievance, that there is no special paragraph relating to their own particular disease in the best books on the subject. What they have to do is to inquire whether their trouble is acute or chronic, that is all; then they have to follow the instructions in this chapter, or the next, as the case may be.

An acute disease causes a considerable inconvenience, pain, or discomfort, it also mostly weakens the patient, and forces him to take to his bed; but it eliminates a great deal of foreign matter in a short time, and hence—under Nature-Cure—it cannot last long. A chronic disease is the opposite of this. It does not interfere much with the patient's regular work and eating; such suffering as it involves is not intolerable, and it generally lasts for an indefinitely long time, unless the habits of life are changed. Fevers, diarrhoea, dysentery, cold, cough, boils or abscesses, eruptions (such as in small-pox), and the like are mostly acute diseases; but these also become chronic,

Diabetes, asthma, rheumatism, nervous debility, dyspepsia, constipation, obesity, and the like are chronic ones. Some are of a double nature; they are usually chronic, but become acute at intervals; in these intervals they ought to be treated as acute, and at other times as chronic. Cases like consumption, paralysis, cancer, epilepsy and leprosy are also to be classed as chronic, and treated on the same plan, for the fasting cure.

The difference in treatment between an acute and a chronic case is this: in an acute case, the treatment *begins* with a fast and *ends* with a course of reconstructive diet, in a chronic case the cure *begins* with a course of diet and *ends* with a single long fast or a series of short fasts, in such a case the body is not quite fit for a fast *in the beginning*, nor is there an urgent and imperative need to fast, as there is in an acute case. Usually, in an acute case there is no hunger, nor appetite; in a chronic case appetite is always present, besides hunger in some degree, though it is never perfectly natural and healthy.

Not only is there no hunger, nor desire for food, in an acute case, but the digestive organs are for the time being closed for digestion, instead, they are being utilised as eliminatory organs; foreign matter is being got rid of

through them; the inner lining gets coated with slimy wastes, which make it certain that any food taken would be made into foul matter; this matter is not easily expelled, since the bowels are weak. The reader will have seen how illnesses like small-pox or typhoid, which in themselves are harmless to life, become fatal by the blocking of the bowel with wastes.

Feeding in acute disease does harm in five ways:

- (1) it aggravates the disease;
- (2) it adds to the duration of the disease;
- (3) it often makes the disease fatal;
- (4) it breeds new diseases, called
"after-effects;"

(5) it lowers the health of the patient, and makes him liable to worse diseases—acute or chronic—in the future.

Feeding aggravates the disease, changing a simple and uncomplicated illness into a serious and dangerous one. This happens during the early days of the illness. A telling example of this effect is given by Dr Tilden in his book on Typhoid Fever. Therein he gave out a medical secret. He had been a regular medical doctor for about twenty-five years and had changed over to Nature-Cure because of his conviction that allopathic medicine was based on ~~grave~~

errors of principle. He knew how medical treatments made patients worse instead of better. He gave out the fact that typhoid fever never occurs naturally, but only by a transformation of simple fevers by routine medical treatment. The drugging and the feeding are commenced from the beginning, when the doctor does not know what the case is. In due course, due to the violence of drugs and unwanted food, the illness assumes the features of typhoid. This it would never do if there were no doctor to feed and drug the patient. Patients whose fever had been led into typhoid by medical treatment have been treated naturally and cured. Such cases prove the utter wrongness of the medical notion that food is needed to keep up vitality' What do they know about vitality?

Fasting leads to results which are quite the opposite of all these, it disarms the disease of its virulence; it shortens the illness, it ensures safety to life from the very beginning, it leads up to a perfect recovery, with freedom from after-effects, and from the chance of future disease. In fact, where the treatment is natural, an acute disease is always a stepping stone to better health; hence the wise follower of Nature-Cure always welcomes a spell of acute disease. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that

sea-sickness is a good thing for health, provided it is respected; if the sea-sick one should fast and take rest in the open air, he would be greatly benefited in health. In the same way, cold, cough, fever and the like will do much good to the patient, if there be no feeding and no drugging. In fine, it is literally true, that diseases of a chronic or incurable nature will be altogether abolished, if acute cases be cured by fasting, and not by medical methods.

The following practical hints should be carefully observed by the follower:

(1) Nothing but pure water should be given to the patient in an acute disease, this may be given in *small* doses for a few hours at first, and more freely afterwards; but after three days or a week dilute fruit-juice or thin soup of non-starchy vegetables may be given once a day. This dieting is practically the same as fasting.

(2) He should be placed in the open air, or in a room where the outer air streams on his face freely and continuously, the rest of the body should be well wrapped up, if the weather be cold;

(3) The fast should be continued so long as the patient remains bed-ridden, and too weak to sit or stand; after that, feeding may be commenced, according to the hints that follow;

(4) The patient must be bathed or wiped with a wet cloth, to keep him clean, once daily,

(5) If the body-heat appears to be below normal—if there be not as much warmth in the feet, or the legs, as in the upper parts of the body—then basking in the sunshine, hot foot-baths, and warm baths followed by remaining in bed, well wrapped up, are useful;

(6) Cooling baths, such as the hip-bath, the spinal bath and the trunk bath, are likely to be useful; instructions are given in full in the author's *Practical Nature-Cure*,

(7) Enemas, to bring out the bowel-contents, are desirable, instructions are given in the same book

(8) The first diet—to be given after the disease perceptibly abates, allowing the patient to leave the bed and walk about a little,—should consist of cocoanut-water, fruit-juice or vegetable soup, in the lowest rations, starchy vegetables ought not to be used for making soup,

(9) The same diet, in the same rations, must be given, once in four to six hours, till there is an increase in general bodily vigour;

(10) When there is such an increase of bodily vigour the diet may be changed thus,

conservatively cooked vegetables may be given once in the day, and the previous diet another time,

(11) When normal bodily vigour is restored, the vegetable diet may be taken twice a day, if needful

Regarding the free use of water for drinking, it may be mentioned that the author has been told of two cases, in which free water-drinking—while fasting—was alone sufficient to cure cholera

The following historical instance is also instructive. Benvenuto Cellini, the famous Italian sculptor, had a number of envious rivals; once, when he was laid up with high fever, they bribed his maid-servant to place a large jar of cold water near him and leave him unattended; they promised her more, if their plan succeeded; it did succeed in part; Cellini was feeling violently thirsty and called the servant, who did not appear; his eye then fell upon the jar; he believed that if he drank cold water he would die but his thirst was strong and urgent; it gave him strength to lift the jar; he drank the whole of it, he then fell back exhausted, and slept soundly for twenty-four hours; when he awoke the fever had passed away and he was all right, he remembered all that had passed;

but he was firmly convinced that drinking cold water in fever is wrong; so he believed that his life was saved by a *special* intervention of God. It is now well known that water is necessary for the healthy movement of the blood, and for washing impure matter out of the body in an illness. In all fevers, in Nature-Cure practice, water is freely given, while food is denied; and the results are uniformly good.

The principle on which diet is regulated after the illness abates is very simple. Nature-Cure does not believe that food is the source of strength. The strength that is to digest the food and make it harmless must come first and then the diet must be altered to suit it. When an acute illness abates, natural hunger and the power to digest the food come of their own accord, as will be seen from the case of small-pox narrated in the first chapter. The power to digest is always in proportion to the general bodily vigour; hence the rule is wait for the increase of bodily vigour, and then adjust the diet to it, as it increases, so should the diet be increased. The notion that the return of normal strength can be hastened by increasing the diet is a wrong one; it would, if acted upon, delay the recovery of strength; strength is more quickly recovered by following the rule given here.

It may be remarked that the *essentials* of treatment are four,—fasting, Sunlight, fresh air in plenty, and free drinking of water. Baths and enemas are not absolutely necessary.

Not alone feeding, but also drugging, is against Nature. The consequences of an acute illness treated naturally are altogether different from those of the same illness treated by feeding and drugging. The difference is just the same as the difference, in the play called Ascent to Heaven, between the ladders and the snakes that there are in the chart.

In the treatment of periodical fevers, it is necessary to note that feeding during the intervals between fevers is certain to prolong the illness. Continuous fasting, till the fever is completely cured is necessary. This subject is dealt with in detail in Chapter XIV of Practical Nature-Cure.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRACTICE OF FASTING IN CHRONIC CASES

Chronic cases are distinguishable into two kinds, as simple chronic and destructive. Examples of the latter are consumption and cancer. Both are the effects of medical mischief

such as the saturation of the body with the vile concoctions of the Jennarian and Pasteurian superstitions, Dr. McNeil has written a book on cancer in which he has given proofs to show that the disease is due to constitutional impurity, due to the persistent flouting of Nature's laws, especially by vaccinations and inoculations. Destructive cases do not admit of prolonged fasting, until the destructive tendency has been fully overcome. But in the beginning and during the treatment, short fasts of three to five days at a time at long enough intervals will be safe and beneficial. We shall now deal with simple chronic cases.

All chronic disease is built upon one uniform foundation, namely, encumbrance of the flesh and nerves with foreign matter to such an extent as to interfere with elimination in the usual ways and by acute diseases. Very often, the way to elimination by an acute illness is blocked by drugs; when an acute illness, such as fever, is suppressed by unnatural treatment, the *drug* is to blame for the chronic disease, that develops in due course.

Drugs may be expelled from the body only by fasting, the water-cure, with diet, as taught by Louis Kuhne and others, is tedious, and very often unsuccessful.

But the plan to be followed in chronic cases is naturally not exactly the same as in acute one; the chronic ought, at first, to reduce his eating, and *alter* his diet, he should give more rest to his digestive organs, than ever before, by eating *only one* substantial a day; this too he must make lighter than the lighter one of his former two daily meals; and in case he has to be at work during the day to earn his living, he must strictly follow the *Night-Dinner Plan*, which will be explained later on, he must omit or reduce to a small fraction, the more *nourishing* articles of diet—rice, bread, milk, curd, ghee, grain or *dal*, and so on—and increase his allowance of vegetables and greens, which are highly favourable to elimination of foreign matter, and the reduction of fat, if there be an excess of fat.

After many months of this line of treatment the patient may begin occasional fasting. The safest method is Progressive Fasting, in which the faster proceeds gradually, dividing the progress into a number of easy stages, in each stage fasting longer than in the previous stage, and repeating the fast in each stage until he becomes master of that length of fasting, before proceeding to the next stage. Thus the patient may fast for twelve hours at a time once a week, until he feels that this length of fasting is easy.

After this he may fast for eighteen hours at a time, with intervals of a week or more. When he has become used to this length of fasting, he may fast one whole day at a time. From this he may proceed to fasts of thirtysix hours, two full days, three, four, five or six days at a stretch, in each stage repeating the fast until he has mastered it. He may stop there and complete his cure by fasting in instalments of six days at a time. Or he may proceed on the progressive plan until he reaches the limit of fourteen days. There is little likelihood of his needing to fast longer at one stretch. It must be noted that fasting really begins only after the stomach becomes quite empty or even later still, when the bowel is emptied.

Of course all this time his diet during the intervals of fasting must be positive and according to the Law of Vital Economy. He must also respect the rules for breaking the fast each time before coming to take solid, substantial meals. It may be said that no chronic must take two substantial meals a day. One must suffice, a very *light* meal being taken at another time if hungry.

After the cure is reached the patient must go on with the treatment in order to stay cured. He may however now take a little more of the

negative foods, such as tubers—potatoes, yams, immature bananas and the like—grains like unpolished rice, whole wheat, ragi, bajri or the like. Grams and pulses he must avoid as a rule, because their protein is defective and the grams are too rich except for labourers. Coconut is a better article of food than the grams. Leafy vegetables furnish enough protein and not too much and are therefore safe.

If during the treatment the condition becomes acute—if a curative crisis comes—he must fast as in an acute case.

For chronic patients who have to earn their living by work during the day, the Night-Dinner Plan—recommended in the textbook—is indispensable. At first sight this would seem to be difficult; but the reader will be wise if he suspends his judgment until he knows it more intimately,—both theoretically and practically. First let us inquire into the *why* of this plan.

The cure of disease—whatever its nature—depends upon *elimination* of the foreign matter, the presence of which is the cause of the disease. Elimination is so much in arrears in every chronic case, that little progress would be made towards the cure, unless more of the vital energy is released for that particular work, than ever before; with two meals a day, or even with one meal,—if it be regularly taken *before*

one's hours of work—the energy available for elimination is very little—not enough for a cure, meanwhile the patient suffers from the disease and gets discouraged, what is needed is that he should have some measure of *present* relief from the symptoms of his disease, at the same time, there should be set up a progressive elimination of the disease-matter, which will take him to a cure in a measurable distance of time, even if he does not take to a complete fast, if he takes a meal of substantial food—even in a reduced ration—and then goes to his day's work, the available vital energy will be *diverted* to the work he has to do as a bread-winner, there would not be left even a quarter of the energy needed for the work of elimination; this work would therefore go on very slowly—not at all fast enough for a cure in a reasonable time. When a man has food lying on his stomach, and at the same time is engaged in work, there is a *competition* between the stomach on the one hand, and the organs by which he does his work, the winner in this competition is almost always the work, the loser is the stomach; digestion is at a standstill, and chemical changes are set up in the food, which generate foreign matter, thus the load of foreign matter in the body is added to—not lightened. The only way to prevent this mischief is to

postpone the principal meal to a time after the end of all labour for the day, there would then be no such competition, as described above, between the stomach and some other organ, all the available vital power will go to the stomach; the latter would also be well rested during the day, and in good condition for its work. There are numerous examples to illustrate the rule, given in the author's Practical Nature-Cure. One of these is given here.

An advocate of the High Court of Madras was a victim of asthma. He purchased a copy of the author's book and followed it as far as he understood the teachings, and got much tangible benefit. He thought he was cured. But he was enjoying a vacation at the time; so he did not discover his error till after the High Court reopened, then his trouble came back; now he consulted the author in person; the latter pointed out his mistake, due to an imperfect study of his book, and advised him to postpone his principal meal till the evening or night, and to be content, during the day, with nominal allowances of food,—sweet buttermilk, fruit-juice, cocoanut water or other very light diet—once at the time of going to court and once again in the afternoon. The patient began to follow it at once and his asthma ceased to trouble him thereafter.

In the first two or three days of a fast there may be some discomfort or distress, more or less vague, especially if there be no preparatory dieting; there will also be a sensation of hunger, real or false. But afterwards there will be a more or less perfect indifference to food; the faster can calmly look on while others are eating. The vital power ceases to produce the digestive juices; the digestive organs begin to serve as channels of elimination; this can be seen in the mouth; the tongue shows a whitish coating; the breath becomes more or less foetid; old stools, adhering to, or imbedded in, the sides or pouches of the bowel, now get dislodged, and begin to move downwards; with the help of enemas, taken every third day or oftener, these can be removed, some, like Dr. Guelpa, recommend castor oil or other purgative, to ensure the removal of these wastes. These old stools are heavier than water and sink in it, while ordinary stools float. When the elimination is at an end, the tongue clears, the breath becomes sweet, and bodily vigour and hunger return together, just as they do after an acute illness, tided over by fasting and other natural methods. During the progress of the fast, it is possible that the faster may have to suffer acute troubles for brief periods.

now and then; these will, as a rule, be renewals of former illnesses, suppressed by drug-treatments; but by taking rest in bed, warming the body by some natural means, by breathing the fresh, pure air, all the time, and by enemas, these can be easily got through. As a rule, unless the complete fast is worked up to through a series of short fasts, it may be wise to secure the attendance of a Nature-Healer, with experience in conducting fasts; in instalmental fasting this would be unnecessary.

During a fast, it is always safe to take water,—cold or warm, as preferred,—as often as possible; the want of water may mean delay in elimination, and this may give trouble.

It has been noted already that enemas are good and proper during a fast; these may be taken once a day, or once every other day, or once in three days at least. These enemas ought to be *non-violent*, the quantity of water used should be between half and one pint; and the water used must be fresh cool drinking water; this should be retained till warmed up in the body—that is, for ten to twenty minutes—and then passed out.

Any deficiency of pure air is likely to make the fast difficult; the faster must spend nearly all his time in an open place; and he must

sleep there too, if possible, in any case, he must not sleep in a room with windows closed, he must place his bed so that a stream of fresh air would be blowing on his face all the night, but he may keep himself warm with coverings from the neck down to the feet; he may also have a cap or woollen wrapper covering the head and ears.

If he finds his bodily heat low, he will do well to bask in the sun, not letting the sunlight fall on his head or face. He must not take very hot, nor very cold, baths. He must take rest, especially when he feels weak.

The greatest sustenance, the most vital, especially for one that is on a very long fast, is FAITH and LOVE—the serene temper of one that knows God and loves Him with a sincere love, and for His sake loves all that live. Selfishness, infidelity, greed, cunning—these and other mental crookednesses are foreign matter of a subtle kind encumbering the mind, and are deadly to the rash faster, who has not examined himself before invoking the mighty power of fasting; the intending faster must make a thorough self-examination before deciding upon a long fast. The author had to supervise a fast of a man, who was deceit incarnate—who believed in friendship as meaning, "what belongs to you is mine, but

what belongs to me is only mine," and who was habitually taking advantage of the trusting nature of men, in order to score mean advantages over them, this man fasted for twenty eight days; he was not feeling quite happy during the fast; but selfishness and vanity were instigating him to carry on; he was induced to break the fast sooner than he intended; after a week of dieting began a series of errors and complications, which finally brought on a severe and dangerous crisis, in which his mind became upset, and from which he recovered at length with great difficulty. The average mind, with all its vices, is able to get on from day to day, because of the suppressive effects of regular and ample eating. If the eating be suddenly greatly reduced, or if there be a long fast, these subtle impurities of mind break loose and manifest as bodily disease; and this crisis may be premature, and therefore dangerous.

On the other hand a man of pure heart, a lover of truth, who means well to all, and who habitually relies on God, and is prepared to accept without bitterness the seeming evils that come by His providence,—having realised the truth, that to God alone belongs all, and that ultimately good will come of His dispensations—who aims always to live in the spirit of

self-surrender, as it is called, can afford to go through the most trying of disciplines,—even a long fast. Such a one will not be swayed by selfishness or vanity in his choice to fast, but will wait for His internal prompting before adopting such a momentous decision. Fasting, which is named उपवास, dwelling in close association with God—is best suited to the faithful devotee

BREAKING THE FAST

This is the most *vital* thing in the fasting-cure, any idiot can fast, for it requires little more than boldness, but only a very wise and self-controlled man can break it aright, and thus avoid the dangers of the *transition*, and reap the full benefit of the fast. The diet from the time of breaking a fast to the return to normal eating is a diet of *transition*, and it must be adapted to the needs of the transition. If mistakes be made in the transition-diet, much of the benefits of the fast will be lost; besides, serious injury to health may be incurred; during the transition-period, the digestive organs and the rest of the body are being reconstructed, and whether they are made sound, strong and serviceable, or the opposite, depends on the dieting during this critical period; if at all expert guidance is necessary, it is necessary just at this stage.

The Chhandogya Upanishad compares the digestive power of one who has fasted for many days to the dying embers of a fire that has burnt itself out; if heavy fuel be placed over these embers, they would be quenched utterly; but if they be carefully fed with light fuel, such as dry grass, they would grow into a fire fit to receive heavy fuel; so too the digestive power in this case is very low and weak; the organs of digestion are disorganised; they are not digestive organs at all, but eliminating ones; during a fast, they have forgotten their natural occupation, and need to be slowly re-educated—by very small rations of somewhat heavier food, and so on, thus they will steadily recover their powers and become fitter than ever before. The general bodily vigour is also similarly low at the end of a long fast. The digestive power is always proportionate to the general bodily vigour: both must recover together; neither can precede the other. The longer the fast, the more is the need for care in the breaking.

The common notion is that the return of strength after a fast can be hastened by eating freely to make up for the privation during the fast. This is a grievous error. It cannot be done, and it ought not to be attempted. It is dangerous to try to force Nature's pace in the

period of re-construction. The power that digests food is not itself the product of food; it uses the products of digestion in the work of reconstruction, that is all. The power that digests and reconstructs is present, but latent and disabled by the disorganised state of the organs; it must be allowed to reorganise them first; and this is very slow work indeed after a long fast.

The only safe guide in this transition dieting is the general bodily vigour. The faster must watch the rate of recovery of this vigour before he makes a change in the diet,—an increase of the ration or quantity, or a change in the quality of the food.

It is foolish to doubt the return of bodily vigour. It *will* return to one who is patient, and avoids the mistake of eating more than the bare minimum he can easily assimilate at the time. On the other hand the return of bodily vigour is sure to be delayed if food is eaten too freely at any time during the transition.

The best diet to break a fast upon is soup of vegetables; the next best is cocoanut-water,—not the *milk* of the kernel, nor the kernel,—or fruit juice. Milk is recommended by many, it of course gives a rapid increase of weight; but the gain in weight which is thus attained,

is not a *real* gain; it is easily lost in an acute illness, as Gandhiji has testified; it seems that flesh built from milk is not quite healthy flesh. Vegetable soup is made by cutting root-vegetables as fine as possible, and then boiling them in plenty of water; it is better to avoid salt and other appetisers for some time. The whole liquid should be taken.

There must be two or three stages of dieting during this transition, especially after a long fast; it is wise to observe these stages even for shorter fasts. And each stage may profitably be sub-divided into two.

In the first stage, the initial diet must be taken as infrequently as possible, and as sparingly as possible each time in the beginning; in the second part of it the same food may be taken, either oftener, or in greater amount each time. In passing from the first part of this stage to the second part one must make sure that there has been an increase of general bodily vigour to justify the increase in diet.

The diet in the second stage may be as follows, one meal of cooked vegetables and one other meal of the same diet as in the first stage. It may be a wise thing not to take this meal daily, but every alternate day, until the stomach becomes stronger. If there is to be

a return to fasting, this stage must be continued till then, or till the preparatory course of diet—of greens and cocoanut—recommended above. This stage also must be divided into two parts; in the second part the amount of food at the one meal may be increased.

The third stage is necessary only for those who want to, and are fit to, take two meals a day, and for those who want to take rice or wheat or other grain-food, along with the vegetables. Rice in the form of aval (*Chiura*, beaten rice) is best. Wheat should be taken in the form of rotis or chapatis made from wholemeal flour, not refined or white flour, known as *maida*. The author learns that even *ata* flour is not wholewheat flour; the miller sieves off the bran and coarse particles through a cloth or sieve; unless a proportionate part of the substance so removed is added again, the flour is bad.

The faster must not, after passing through these stages, commit those mistakes in eating, which were the cause of his becoming diseased, he must not get back to his former diet, if *that* was unnatural and unwholesome; he must take to a reformed diet, consisting of one or two meals a day,—according to his needs—of vegetables conservatively cooked, with cocoanut; these should be his staple food; he need not use rice or wheat or grams or dal; if he

does take any of these he should take less of them than of the vegetables, which are the most wholesome of all; grams or dal must be eaten very sparingly indeed, except by hardworking labourers. The reader is advised to study Chapters V and VI of Paractical Nature-Cure, where the subject is fully explained Diet-reform is far easier after a fast than before.

An important caution in breaking a fast is to beware of yielding to a ravenous appetite for eating, which may begin to show itself on the first or second day of the transition. By eating very slowly, by chewing every mouthful, by very strictly limiting the quantity beforehand, and by avoiding temptation in all possible ways, this appetite may be conquered; but one must be very much on his guard against it for the first week of the transition, and in passing from one stage to another. If there be any yielding to temptation, then one must fast again for some time to work off the evil effects.

In the case of long fasts, the stages of transition dieting must be long, about one week may be allowed for each stage; in the case of very short fasts, one or two days for each stage may be enough.

After a fast of one day the fast may be broken on one of the foods prescribed above;

about four to six hours afterwards—when hunger returns—the usual meal may be taken; but the bulk of food eaten at this meal must not be more than half as usual.

An eighteen hours' fast once or twice a week will be a good thing for chronicics to begin with. This is begun by omitting supper on the day previous to the day of fasting; the fast is continued the next day, until about 3 p.m. It is then broken on one of the diets named, and the usual meal is taken at night; but less should be eaten than usual, so that the stomach should be very lightly loaded. Normal eating may be resumed from the next day. This measure of fasting is also desirable for those who are not aware of being diseased in any way; by this they can get rid of seeds of disease, which are very likely to be lurking in their bodies; they can also thus make amends for errors in eating committed during the week.

At the end of a fast of two or three days, the three stages must each be not less than one day. At the end of a fast of one week or more, each stage must cover two or three days. The faster must be guided by the principle given above—that digestive power increases only at the same rate as the general vigour of the body—and not by these instructions, if there be any discrepancy.

The practice of fasting on the lines laid down in this chapter is also recommended for people who are not aware of being diseased in any way, they can improve their health by this means; most people have foreign matter encumbering their bodies; these encumbrances are being added to by their ways of life, and in the course of years would surely fructify into actual disease; this can be prevented by the practice of occasional fasting and by obeying the Laws of Health-Culture, which are taught in detail in the author's *Practical Nature-Cure*. It may be mentioned also that mental disorders, such as lunacy or insanity, can be cured by fasting.

Of course, fasting is also an aid to the pursuit of spiritual perfection. It helps to unfold and bring to maturity the higher faculties of mind, which may be made use of by the spiritual aspirant. It also helps to bring out and eliminate lurking defects of mind, thereby allowing the building up of a better and stronger character.

PART II

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters would have gone far to convince the reader that Fasting is the most powerful medicine known to science. Fasting is not, for an encumbered person, the being cut off from the source of life. In fact, it is a condition in which the finest and most potent food,—invisible food, *akasa*—is being made available.

Fasting also economises vitality. It saves energy from being wasted, and is thus the most *scientific* Rest-Cure there is. Eating—when Nature calls for a fast—means the imposing of very hard work on the whole vital machinery—including the heart, the liver, the spleen and the nervous system—thus curtailing the energy available for cure.

Fasting does great good, also, by lessening the oxygen needed; this means that the available oxygen is all used for helping to burn up and eliminate disease-matter. It can of course be supplemented by better breathing and other measures of the Air-cure, and by the Sun-cure.

Nature-Cure is based on the great FACT, that it is Nature—God's Grace—that cures disease. Fasting is the condition of Nature's success in Her healing work.

He that gets cured by fasting and other Nature's medicines—air, sunlight, etc.—is thereby restored to Her bosom. He is likely to be, thereafter, a more faithful follower of Her laws of Health-Culture, than one who gets relief by drugs without doing amends for his sins.

Patients take drugs to avoid the necessity of making amends to Nature for disobedience. In the long run this does not pay. He that has tried this course must later make penance for this *double* disobedience: He is fortunate if he does this before it becomes too late.

Trust Nature and resign yourself to Her for ever more.

CHAPTER VII

APPROACH TO FASTING

The practice of fasting may prove to be too taxing to many patients, or may seem to them to be risky, because it might stir up premature crises, as explained before. For those that prepare themselves for fasting by a suitable course of dieting with due attention to Vital Economy, and who take to progressive or instalmental fasting this fear or doubt need not arise. But even for these during the preparatory course, and for those that have fears or doubts at all times, good results can be achieved by an approach to fasting.

The simplest and lowest of all is the No-Breakfast Plan, which if continued for some time after real Hunger is born would promote elimination and body-lightening. The next higher is the One-Meal-a-day plan, which according to the size of the meal would imply fasting for eight to twelve hours a day, and would by itself effect a great deal of improvement in health in time, whatever the case; this however would be unsuitable for consumption and similar destructive cases.

For all cases a very near approach to fasting for one or more days at intervals would be a safe and sure way to accelerate the return to health. This is done by taking no substantial meals—not even one meal a day—but only very light food, preferably in liquid form—as juices, soups, gruel, drinks or the like—but of a highly positive quality as taught in chapter VI of the text book. Tender coconut water—where available—is a very good food for this purpose. Buttermilk reinforced with some herbal juice or juice of raw tender vegetables is also very good. In this form of dieting the principle of Vital Economy should be attended to, so as to reduce the vital energy spent in the labours of assimilation.

APPENDIX I

Nature Cause and Cure of Disease

Removal of the cause is alone the true Cure; all else is a fraud. If Disease is to be really cured, its cause must be removed; we must therefore know the true cause of disease.

This cause is none other than the presence of foreign matter in the body, whereby the body is made impure. This foreign matter is something quite other than the so-called germs of disease, which unscientific medicos believe to be the cause of disease. In Chapter IV of *Practical Nature-Cure* it is shown that germs are not the cause, but some of the effects, of disease, and are almost always absent at the beginning of the illness, but the foreign matter, here spoken of, is present long before the actual outbreak of the illness—in fact, many decades in advance of the illness. Besides, the foreign matter, which is the cause of disease, is inert, dead matter, which does nothing of itself; it is the life principle that does everything; the foreign matter stands in the way of Life—is a hindrance to its normal working—and hence Life seeks to get rid of it; when the efforts of Life to get rid of this hindering matter become vigorous, then the ordinary activities

of Life are suspended, and extraordinary activities begin; these extraordinary activities are the illness. Disease is therefore defined as an effort of Life to rid itself of an encumbrance of foreign matter.

The mere presence of foreign matter is already Disease, but it is disease in its *seed-form*, in latency. The patent forms of disease are in truth processes of getting rid of these seeds. Thus what we call disease is really a process of cure. We have simply to let it go on.

The main thing we have to do is simply to cease from hindering the elimination of foreign matter. We hinder it by asking Life to do any work other than the work of elimination, which is for the time being the most urgent; by feeding we seek to turn the vital energies away from that work. If we abstain from doing this, Nature will do the rest; whatever else we can do is of less importance. When the elimination is finished for the time being, the disease disappears, because its purpose is fulfilled.

APPENDIX II

In the Chhandogya Upanishad we have the following passage :—

The father said, "The mind of man has sixteen parts. Eat not for fifteen days. Drink water freely; for life is of water and will not fail one who drinks it." The son ate not for fifteen days, and then approached his father and said, "What shall I say?" The father said, "(Say) the *riks*, *samans* and *yajuses*." The son said, "I am unable to remember them, Sir." The father then said "My dear boy, just as a small piece of live coal, as big as a glowworm, which may remain out of a big fire, nearly quenched, cannot burn more than its own size, so, out of the sixteen parts of thy mind, there may be left only one part now, and hence you are unable to remember the Vedas. Now eat, and thou shalt learn from me." The son ate and went to the father and was able to remember all that was asked. To him the father said, "My dear boy, as the tiny bit of charcoal, left out of a big fire, just as big as a glow-worm, after it is fed with some light fuel, can burn more than before, so now, the one-sixteenth part of thy mind, which was left out of sixteen, has been nourished by food, and burns again, and by this mind thou art able to remember the Vedas, for *mind is of food, life of water, and speech of light*."

APPENDIX III.

THE CALORIE THEORY

Quite an unnecessary difficulty is conjured up by some people, which is borrowed from western science. Even today that science knows very little about food and still less about its relation to life. But quite prematurely and without a patient study of the relevant facts science adopted the mechanistic hypothesis, which seemed to be true in the world of inanimate Nature, and sought to extend it to the subject-matter of biology. One of the consequences was the calorie theory of food values and the notion that what is called life is only an effect of the interplay of purely mechanical forces. And on the basis of certain crude and one-sided experiments an effort was made to ascertain the number of calories that the food must provide for health and fitness. If this theory were true then fasting would be impossible except for very short periods, and even then only for sheer necessity. From this theory arose the medical practice of feeding the sick. It was supposed that thereby the patient's vitality would be maintained and helped to overcome the disease. The Nature-Cure view—which is abundantly verified in practice—is that disease has no existence apart from life and hence the notion of life overcoming disease.

is a superstition. In the Nature-Cure view feeding in disease is feeding the disease, and thereby worsening and prolonging it, often making it fatal.

There need be no elaborate criticism of this pseudo-scientific theory, because it has been proved that fasting for even long periods is safe — except under exceptional circumstances. Sick men who had fasted all along until the illness subsided, for a month or more, have made perfect recoveries. Other men have fasted for equally long periods and have been benefited. It is claimed with justice that fasting for two weeks or more is a rejuvenatory process. That which is declared to be impossible has been done so often that the theory itself is put on its defence. But 'educated' minds are so paralysed by the notions that have been imparted to them in their schools, that this practical demonstration is not enough.

It is true that scientists have made a few studies of fasting. But the fasts that they have studied were abnormal ones, namely fasts undertaken by professional fasters, who were confined in a laboratory for observation. No studies were made of fasts of the followers of Nature-Cure, undertaken for the cure of disease. Hence these scientists have no right to declare the truth about fasting.

A detailed discussion of the facts which the theory is said to be based is not necessary. But a few well-established facts which are fatal to the theory shall be set forth to show that life is not the effect of food — that it is an independent reality.

The conclusion based on the theory is that not less than 2500 calories a day are required for each adult. There have always been people who eat very low rations as a law of life, and to the extent that their food is positive they maintain health and fitness and live long. Marco Polo, the Italian traveller, has remarked that the Brahmins of this country live to a great old age and has expressed his opinion that this was the effect of their abstinence in eating. Even now there are many who practise abstemious eating and are of opinion that the practice is healthful and conducive to clarity and strength of mind as well as to great longevity. There is the example of Luigi Cornaro, an Italian nobleman, who in middle age took to abstemious eating with miraculous good effects on his health and fitness, and he lived to be nearly a hundred years old, and he has written some books setting forth his experiences and his conclusion that abstemiousness is the surest safeguard of health and fitness.

Professor Chittenden of America conducted a number of long-continued experiments in low rations of food on a great variety of people and demonstrated that only good effects resulted from it. The body becomes lighter and the vital powers are greatly increased, with the result that diseases are dissipated and positive health restored or established.

There is also the fact that dyspeptics would be incurable if the theory were true. Such sufferers have achieved a cure through disregarding the theory altogether. In their case a thorough application of the Law of Vital Economy is the chief means of cure.

Dr. Dewey has pointed out that if the medical theory were true sleep should become unnecessary. The argument can be further extended; not sleep alone, but death could be avoided. But the inevitability of death is not disputed.

It is not our contention that eating is unnecessary. It is necessary as material for growth and for repair and renewal. It is contended by some that a particular food-essence, sugar or starch, is necessary for muscular work. There is no convincing proof for this contention. But the amount thus needed has not been accurately ascertained. There are other ways of fixing the minimum need in

food. The chief rule is that the ration must be fixed with reference to the great Law of Vital Economy. If this law be observed then the food-ration will adjust itself to the need.

However, much of this discussion will prove purely academical when one actually takes to the practice of fasting, especially to progressive fasting. He who has mastered the art of fasting will know by personal experience that there are mysteries in biology which modern science has not dreamt of.

PART II

VITAL ECONOMY

Vital Economy is the economising of the vital force, with a view to building up a Vital Reserve, for ensuring the cure of diseases in the natural way and for maintaining health at the highest possible level. This principle is conspicuous by its utter absence in allopathic medical practice. The undoubted success of Nature-Cure in all kinds of otherwise incurable cases is due in very great part to the observance of this profoundly important principle. The reason for this difference between the two systems is that the allopaths as a rule deny the existence of life as an independent reality. Nature-Cure asserts this basic fact of Nature. It is also a fact that before western allopathy accepted the lead of Pasteur medical men believed in the existence of life.

Modern biological science in the West has for a long time been proclaiming its disbelief in the existence of life. They maintain that life is just an appearance resulting from the interplay of chemical and physical forces inside the body. They do not consider the question of what it is that regulates and harmonises these blind

forces. The new biological theory is called the mechanistic theory. The other theory is called the Vitalistic theory.

Both medicos and biologists take it for granted that the two theories are mutually contradictory, so that if one believes in one of them he must reject the other. But there is no reason for this assumption. That the living body is a machine of some sort has always been obvious, and was accepted as one side of the truth of life by our ancients. These upheld the vitalistic theory, and gave unassailable reasons in support of it. * Commonsense will suffice to help to see that life must exist, in order to run the machine, namely the living body. A machine needs and implies an operator, because it cannot run by itself. Every machine begins to work after it has been started by a sentient being. If it has been started, it will go on working in some uniform way until it is stopped by its operator. If its working has to be altered, the operator must do something to it. If the machine be not a very simple one, the operator will have to be doing something to it again and again. In the living body the activities are so numerous and interconnected, that a sentient operator must be assumed, who

* In the appendix an allegorical story is quoted from the Vedantic lore to show that this view was held by the ancients.

regulates and harmonises the diverse processes, so that life may be possible. Why this very simple and obvious thought never occurred to these clever people is impossible to understand unless we assume that a certain perversity and impudence has led them astray. That this may be the case will be apparent from a criticism of the medico-scientific mind given by an eminent surgeon who later became a hygienist and leader of a popular movement for diet-reform, which the medicos did not like, and which finally led to his taking his name off the medical register, in order to be free to do his work according to his conscience. This is what he said "The unfortunate factor in all professions is that in proportion as one develops a special sense, one loses one's commonsense."

A stray scientist here and there does point out that the two theories are just complementary—that they are two parts of one whole truth. But the common herd of scientists and medicos seem not to have even heard of it. And they are incapable of seeing the reasonableness of this view, probably because their finer senses have been lost through their being partners in one of the colossal crimes of modern western civilisation, known as vivisection.

In this connection it is worthy of note that even a bigoted denier of life sometimes finds

himself forced to concede the existence of some mysterious Power inside the body, which interferes, when it becomes necessary, to prevent death or some other serious untoward effect, which would otherwise be inevitable. Dr Dubois of America, writing on 'Basal Metabolism,' deals with the effects of a long-continued 'starvation.' Up to a point the effects are found to be consistent with the medical dogma about fasting, namely that in fasting life is maintained by the consumption of the faster's own flesh. But a stage comes in a long fast, when the dogma breaks down. Something happens, which must not happen if the dogma were true. There is practically no further loss of flesh, but the faster does not die, nor suffer from any serious evil effect. Dubois seeks to explain away this occurrence by saying that there is some mysterious power which intervenes to save life by 'establishing the basal metabolism at a lower level.' To the 'scientific' biologist this mysterious power is unmanifest until it interferes to falsify his pet theory. But the truth is, this mysterious power exists all along and is regulating the bodily function. It is this that we call life.

So it is by no means unfair for us to refuse to take these self-styled scientists seriously.

The 'scientific' reason for the denial of life is just negative—that the scientists have not yet been able to study life at first hand, as they do the chemical and mechanical forces. The truth is that even these are only inferred by them, they do not perceive these forces, any more than they perceive life, but only the results of their working.

It is true that we can only infer Life from its actions. But it would be unreasonable to deny its existence for this reason, just as it would be unreasonable to deny the existence of electricity, magnetism or the ether. It has been admitted by the great scientist, Einstein, that science can neither affirm nor deny the existence of the ether. We say that in the same way it is not within the province of science to deny Life. Ignorance is neither evidence nor argument.

There is another consideration. Medicos, whose procedures are ever a denial of life, are somehow able to go on almost all the time without paying the least regard to life. But Nature-Curists cannot go on in that way. Those that do so are not real Naturists, but only pretenders. It is only by paying heed to the demands that Life makes at every stage that the faithful Nature-Curist can steer clear of mistakes.

and reach the desired end. The practice of Nature-Cure is very largely based on the conservation of the Vital Force. The great success of Nature-Cure in all kinds of diseases of a fatal tendency is due to this policy. Hence no Nature-Curist can deny Life. Nature-Cure itself is a complete refutation of the medical doctrine and an unanswerable proof of the existence of Life.

Life is just that extremely subtle power, transcending science, which builds up a living body according to a definite pattern and maintains it in working order. The living body begins as a minute, microscopic particle in the mother's womb. What is it that makes it grow into a complicated living body with innumerable parts, an exact copy of its parent? What is it that separates it from the parent and starts it as an independent being? What is it that differentiates the original substance into a great variety of tissues and organs, and guides their diverse activities so as to serve one common purpose? How are health and longevity possible? Is life a property of physical matter, or is it something that masters that matter?

We have seen that the inferential evidence for Life is irresistible, because Life alone explains all the facts, and because there is no

evidence on the other side. But there is also direct evidence, namely the experiences of exceptional men, who had transcended the limitations of the Lower Nature and obtained first hand knowledge of things invisible. These men are called 'seers' or 'sages'. These men, when teaching their disciples, also appealed to reason in support of their teaching. Their teaching is that there is a Real Self, whose consciousness gives rise to mind, which in its turn begets life, which builds the body. This teaching may be confirmed by science, but cannot be contradicted by it. From the sages we learn that this visible body is not the only body we have, but that there is a subtle body also, which is mental, and which is the home of life. They tell us that this subtle body is immortal—that it will endure as long as time itself exists, and can be destroyed only by the destruction of time itself. It is the reincarnating soul, which must not be confounded with the Real Self, because the latter is just a witness and hence is unaffected by the good and evil fortunes of the soul.

Allied to the medical theory that Life has no independent existence is their teaching that food is the source of vital power. On this unproved assumption is based the calorie theory of food. When considered in the light

of Nature-Cure experience this theory will be seen to be false. If the theory were at all true, no dyspeptic can live long because he cannot digest the prescribed rations. Therefore he must waste away and die soon. It is a fact that dyspeptics are medically incurable, they are worsened by being made to take the heavy rations prescribed. But they are cured by Nature. And the first step in their cure is just the discarding of the whole medical teaching.

Also Dr. Dewey showed that if the theory were true, sleep would be unnecessary, we may add that if the theory were true death would be avoidable. Apart from that, there is the undeniable fact that life is the utiliser of the food, and must therefore be independent of it. Food is a tax on Vitality. Vital power has to be spent in digesting and assimilating it. It is this that makes it a potential enemy of Health and Life, unless rightly used.

Also the fact that fasts as long as two months or more are possible not only without loss of life or injury to health, but with great benefit to health, proves that the theory is false. Fasting, rightly practised, is a rejuvenator.

The fact is, there is more in food than science can ever know. Herein we may take

note of the wise saying of Vivekananda, '*Beware of the scientist.*' Indeed we would be right to say that Medicine is not Science, but Nescience.

Because medical Nescience is based on these false teachings, its effects, taken in the mass, are disastrous. It conducts its patients from acute, through chronic, to destructive kinds of disease, and finally to death. Nature-Cure, because it is based on the opposite teachings, does just the opposite. It leads them backwards, from the destructive to the chronic, from the chronic to the acute, and from thence to renewed good health and fitness. In the forward march to death under medical care two serious mistakes are committed, namely the reckless use of drugs and filthy concoctions which directly paralyse the vital processes, and the equally reckless waste of vital power by stuffing the stomach with more or less negative foods.* Both these constitute violence to Life. In the march back to Health this twofold violence is strictly avoided. Two rules are followed, to ensure that the progress shall be back to Health, namely Vital Economy and the use, where proper, of highly positive food.

* The medical error in the feeding of patients is threefold, namely (1) the prohibition of fasting when Nature demands it, (2) the giving of food in excess, thus wasting vital power and (3) the giving of negative foods, which in no way help the cure of disease.

Vital Economy can be understood by the analogy of the saving of money for the building up of a bank balance, or that of the storing of water in a reservoir or lake for agricultural or other purposes. The saving has to be greater, the greater the previous waste, which had resulted in indebtedness, mortgages and other ruinous conditions. The man in debt needs to save from his income and invest it for paying off his debts. It is not enough for him to equalise his income and expenditure. So in the case of the chronically sick it will not be enough to eat moderately. It would also be necessary to fast also—for some hours every day, and for some days every month. The same principle applies also in the choice of foods. Balanced dieting will be of little use to the chronic. He will need to make up for his previous negative eating, by eating chiefly positive foods—avoiding negative foods, or reducing them to a minimum.

The vital power thus saved goes into what we call the Vital Reserve. This is the guarantee of Health as well as of Happiness. The happiness comes by the mere existence of the Vital Reserve. It is the natural, uncaused Happiness of the Real Self, which is referred to in the Upanishads as *Ananda*. It is the अङ्गत्रिमानन्द of

the baby and the Sage, referred to in the following verse of the Bhagavatam :

द्वावेव चिन्तयामुक्तौ परमानन्द आल्लतौ ।
यो चिमुश्यो जडो वालो यो गुणेभ्यः परं गतः ॥

" Only two persons are free from care, floating in the ocean of supreme bliss,—the untutored child who knows nothing of the world, and the Sage that has gone beyond the senses."

Abundance of power in the Vital Reserve is thus the foundation of a healthy and happy life. The absence of it, as shown by Milton in his *Paradise Lost* is the cause of suffering.*

Also, when there is an abundance of power in the Vital Reserve, there is a feeling of lightness of the body, readiness for any kind of work and the ability to look the whole world in the face. So we arrive at this Rule of Life, that we must use our vital power economically always, so as to build up and maintain a sufficient Vital Reserve. Waste of Vital power comes by indulgence in all kinds of sense-enjoyments, the most wasteful of which is eating.

Bhartrihari has a very telling verse expressing the ruinous effects of sexual indulgence.

तावन्महत्वं पांडित्यं विवेकित्वं कुलीनता ।
यावज्ज्वलति नागेषु हन्तं पंचेषु पावकः ॥

* "To be weak is miserable, doing or suffering."

"Only so long as the fire of lust does not begin to burn in the body does one retain greatness, culture, discrimination and the habit of acting in harmony with one's hereditary excellence." But the excesses of sex arise out of a more common cause, namely indulgence of the sense of taste.

The Bhagavatam tells us .

तावज्जितेन्द्रियो न स्याद्विचितान्येन्द्रियः पुमान् ।
नजयेद्रसनं यावज्जितं सर्वं जिते रसे ॥

"One does not become a master of the senses by conquering all the senses except the one of taste. But if the sense of taste be conquered, all are conquered."

This means that the over-indulgence of the sense of taste is the prime cause of the mental weakening, which leads to the slavery to other indulgences. It means that he that controls himself in eating in accordance with the Hygienic Law will be able to live a moral life, not those that pay no heed to hygienic laws. This shows that morality includes Hygiene, and that both are one indivisible whole. In the same way it will be seen that Religion and Morality are one and the same—an indivisible whole. The right view is that the three are one. Religion, rightly understood, comprises both Ethics and Hygiene.

The most outstanding fact about Life is its relation to food. And the one most important fact about food—which medicos almost always ignore—is that it is a *tax* on vitality. . It is true that Life can afford to pay this tax regularly, and still go on, almost as if there were no such tax, if the tax be not ruinous. Just as governments are apt—if there be no vital bond of kinship between the rulers and the ruled—to tax the subject to the point of breaking his back, so too, the average man is prone to taxing the Vital Force to the breaking point. This he does because he is unaware or forgetful of the truth that his future health and happiness depend on his practising Vital Economy and would be forfeited if he defies that Law

In one of his verses Bhartrihari warns the king against oppressing the cultivator of the soil, and advises him to pay special attention to his welfare. He compares the earth to a cow and the cultivator to her calf. If the calf be wellcared for, the owner can milk the cow. So too the king can derive a steady and fair revenue from the land if the cultivator is healthy and fit. This is a good analogy for our subject. The King that taxes only the superfluity of the subject does not affect his efficiency as a producer of wealth. So too the man that

uses only the superfluity of his vital power in activities and enjoyments,—allowing more than enough to be added to the Vital Reserve as an insurance against unforeseen chances and as a foundation for Health and Longevity,—will be able to enjoy life in a reasonable measure for a long time, and would not have to face serious diseases or disabilities. This prudential adjustment of the tax on vitality is of great importance, whether for Health or Cure.

Too many meals a day, too early commencement of the day's programme of eatings, excessive loads of food on the digestive organs, and the eating of meals at those times, when the Vital Force,—having other labours to sustain at the time—will not be available for digesting and assimilating it—these are the mistakes that are regularly committed by most civilised men of the present day all over the world. And these errors in the mode of life lead him inevitably to his bankruptcy of Vital Power. Its consequences are disease, suffering and death.

Vital Economy is just the avoidance of all these errors, which may be termed hygienic sins. Vital Economy has for its aim the protection and increase of the Vital Reserve, which is the means of assurance that Health will be

maintained and that, if diseases do come, they will be cured easily in a natural way.

The problem of cure is not alone one of choosing the right foods. Foods which are themselves excellent will, if Vital Economy be neglected, prove too heavy a burden on the Vital Force, and this will prevent the hoped-for cure.

It is for this reason that Revelation describes food as being both life and death. There is a wide margin of difference between the amount of food that the patient would like to take—from temptation or any other cause—and the amount that he actually needs to take. Very often there is a need for suspending eating altogether—for fasting.

IN HEALTH

Vital Economy for the healthy is maintained by observing the following rules, which are summarised from 'Practical Nature-Cure.'

1. Do not eat while the body is heavy with retained stools or other foreign matter. If the bowels do not move and thus become empty, fast until they move.
2. If you take a solid meal at night, do not eat any meal in the morning, but observe the No-Breakfast Plan.

3. Wait till you get natural and fully mature Hunger. This will be sometime after the stomach becomes empty. This will be recognised by the first clean wind.

4. If you are tired, or if your mind be perturbed, postpone your meal, till the condition is changed.

5. If you have to be at work during the day, do not eat the principal meal before, but after the work is over, as else the meal will not be well digested.

6. Do not eat hastily. Chew every mouthful well, before swallowing.

7. Stop eating when you get a signal from the stomach—the wind that indicates that the stomach has had a fair load.

8 Eat only one course at the meal—not many courses one after another.

9. Let not your food be highly seasoned with salt, chillies and sour articles like tamarind or lime juice, so as to be too appetising. Let your food be unstimulating to the sense of taste, as Kuhne says.

10. Make sure that enough space is left in the belly for the free movement of the lungs in breathing, and for the drinking of water if needful.

11. Adjust the quantity eaten so that you will not have a sense of heaviness within two hours after eating.

12. Eat only one principal meal a day—not two. Let the other meal be a light one, even if you are hungry for it. It should be light both in quality and quantity.

IN DISEASE

How is Vital Economy to be applied in the cure of disease? The first point to be grasped by the student here is that there is in fact a very wide margin of difference between the actual vital need for food of a sick person and the amount that he would eat—and as a rule does eat—if he had only to follow his own inclination. Not alone chronics, but even patients in acute disease have an unnatural appetite for food, which, if indulged, would destroy all their chances of cure. Often the condition is such as to require fasting, or a very close approach to it. But if a patient allows himself to eat all, he would eat twice as much as it would be proper for him to eat. In this way his chances of his getting an early cure are lost. The effects on his future health—if he survives the illness—are also bad.

On the other hand, if the patient is wise and restricts his diet, he would be saving

enough vital power to cure his diseases and recommence his life anew as one rejuvenated

Vital Economy presents a problem to some patients, because they have work to do and feel that they cannot afford to take leave and rest for recuperation. And because they wish to go on working they go on eating substantial meals, believing that nourishment is necessary to enable them to do their work. In this way their defects of health are prolonged and become chronic. The proper thing for them to do is to abstain from work altogether for the radical cure of their ill-health. But it may not be quite impossible for them to reach a cure by the wise application of the Law of Vital Economy, while continuing to work as far as may be necessary, because it is not true that substantial meals must be eaten for them to be able to work. They can reduce their food to something approaching fasting and still go on doing their work. The diet may be more or less on the model of the approach to fasting, described in the former part of this book. Vital Economy is effected in some cases by abstaining from work, in others by abstaining from food, and in other cases by both, according to the actual needs of each case. He that goes on eating for the sake of work, when in fact there is a need for him to fast or make an approach to fasting, will soon

arrive at a state in which he will have to give up both work and eating in order to save his life. The fault is not in the Laws of Nature.

IN ACUTE DISEASE

From the very beginning it has been the clear teaching of Nature-Curists that diseases are Life's efforts to remove certain unwanted substance called foreign matter, because it cannot and does not unite and become one with the body. It consists of various kinds of filthy substance These while being retained inside, cause obstruction of some of the vital functions, and thus lower the level of health. Its elimination is the means for raising health to its original level. In acute diseases the encumbering foreign matter is comparatively less than in chronic diseases; at the same time, in such a state of body, Life has a greater degree of power for doing its work. Thus the Life is able to make a vigorous effort to expel the substance. Such a vigorous effort is an acute disease. Hence a cure of the disease—its natural and spontaneous cessation by the elimination of the foreign matter—is certain, unless there is interference through ignorance.

Interference comes as a rule from the allopathic doctor, who views the disease as a foreign invader, which has to be met and defeated on purely militaristic principles,

There is really no scope for militarism here. We have said that the disease is a *vital* process. It is no more separable from Life than the crooked motion of a snake can be separated from the snake itself. He that shoots at that crooked motion is shooting at the snake, even though he intends no harm to the snake. Such is the allopath's conduct in aiming heavy doses of poison at the 'disease'. He is really aiming them at Life. In fever heavy doses of quinine or some other nerve-killer are given by mouth or injected. Where the regular dose is ineffective, it is doubled, trebled or quadrupled without scruple. The doses are repeated until the fever ceases, which means, until the vital power is completely paralysed and forced to surrender unconditionally. The doctor and patient are jubilant. But Life has been worsted and has suffered serious loss. The foreign matter is not eliminated as originally designed by Nature.

It is not the intention of the doctor to weaken life. On the contrary he does all he can to sustain and strengthen it. The only way known to him is to stuff the patient all he can. In this respect every doctor is a law unto himself. His text books tell him in emphatic language that the body-weight must be saved, and that for this the maximum of feeding with

highly nourishing foods is necessary. The book-writers are mostly laboratarians having no practical experience. Quite a good number of doctors find out that text-book instructions are foolish and dangerous to follow. So it happens that many doctors feed their patients only as much as they dare and no more. But the proportion of fools to wise men is just the same in the profession as outside, now, since more and more doctors are wanted, and the average recruit to the profession is even below the average in intelligence. What ever common sense he had at first has been squeezed out of him through the long and stupid teaching he receives in his medical college. So most doctors stuff their patients.

The Vital Force is by no means made stronger for its intended labours by this feeding. Just the contrary. Vital energy does not come from food, because it is not of the same level as the crude energies that the scientists know of. In fever digestion is at a stand still. In other acute cases the digestion is more or less deranged. Hence the food undergoes putrefaction or fermentation, according as it is protein or starch. Though the food be not digested, it has to be disposed of,—passed along a tubing of about thirty feet in length, till it is dumped into the bowel, where it may

stagnate for any length of time. Thus the vital energy is taxed and weakened. This is certainly not Vital Economy. It is vital extravagance! In due course it leads to some degree of vital bankruptcy, which may lead to death or some very serious chronic disease.

This double sabotage of the vital effort, popularly called disease, is strictly prohibited in Nature-Cure. Not only is the use of drugs—which is stupid—prohibited, but also the giving of food is forbidden, so that there may be no wastage of vitality in disposing of unnecessary and unwanted food. Even if some emaciation occurs, we do not mind. Even if the illness drags on for three months, and then the patient dies, it is not the emaciation that kills him, but some undiagnosed disease of a vital organ. In Nature-Cure the acute illness cannot possibly drag on for so long a time. I myself fasted for only thirtyfive days, when I was laid up with a very severe form of sub-acute—mixed acute and chronic—disease, which seemed dangerous to life, but it left spontaneously, because of the long fasting and I got a new lease of life. This illness was in 1931.

Unfortunately, it happens that scarcely any text book of Nature-Cure gives any categoric statement and explanation of the Law of Vital

Economy. Dr. Dewey is one of the few that were aware of the need for fasting in acute cases. Louis Kuhne does not stress the need. He does not use the words 'Vital Economy. The result is that many Nature-Curists are unaware of the need of Vital Economy in acute diseases other than simple fevers. In small-pox, which is a vigorous process of clearing off the foreign matter, fasting is even more important, and feeding is likely to cause a clogging of the bowels, which leads to perforation and death. So also in discontinuous fevers, followers of Kuhne and even Lindlahr commit the mistake of taking or giving food when the fever intermits—that is, in the intervals between fevers. In these intervals the fever has just gone inside and will come out again. The weakening of the Prana by taking food then has the effect of making the fever more and more chronic. Thus the fever drags on, for an indefinitely long time. The right way is to fast continuously without a break for a few weeks, and if still the fever does not abate, take to a nominal medicinal diet, which would be a very close approach to fasting.

Malarial fever is no exception to this rule. It is of no use fasting for just three days and then complaining that the fever is not gone. It was reported in the papers that Gandhiji,

who had malaria just before his release from detention in the Aga Khan's palace, fasted for three days and then took quinine, because some doctors told him that quinine should be taken for killing the germs. My youngest son Ramachandra fasted for sixteen days when he had malaria in Benares; and he was cured.

Germs arise from the serum of the blood. This serum consists of what Bechamp called microzymes—living proximate principles which are very much smaller than the germs. Indeed these microzymes are the material of which body-bells as well as germs are made. If the microzymes are sick—morbid, because of wrong food—they give rise to germs. If they are healthy they would help to repair body-cells. The germs that thus are born are very useful to the purposes of life. They work as scavengers, eating up the filthy particles of the blood and thus purifying it. Thus it is neither necessary nor proper to kill the germs. When through fasting the body is purified and lightened, and the Life strengthened, the germs disappear of themselves. If they are massacred by quinine or any of its substitutes, the microzymes will remain and the blood will be more impure than ever, and new and worse diseases become possible.

The germs in malaria usually arise in the bowel. There is a great increase in the number of leucocytes—white corpuscles which are composed in great part of the blood-filth—and a great lessening of the number of red corpuscles, the carriers of purifying oxygen. This condition is called anaemia (bloodlessness) which was one of the after-effects noticed in Gandhiji's case and it was due to the use of quinine. In the Natural Way, where Druglessness is the first Law of Life, the germs are quite tame and submissive to the Vital Force, and the result of the illness is not anaemia or other after effect, but better health.

In other acute diseases also fasting is the best policy. This is particularly so in cases like smallpox, in which there is elimination of a great deal of foreign matter. But even in the milder forms of acute disease, there must be fasting in the beginning for three to five days; thereafter if necessary a very low diet of positive, medicinal nature may be taken. But the principle to be observed is the same. This may be algebraically expressed as follows:

Healing Power is equal to the Total Vitality minus Expenditure.

Hence what the patient or his care-taker must see to is this. The expenditure must be

made as near to Zero as possible, then nearly the whole of the Total Vitality would be available as Healing Power and the cure is not only ensured, but hastened. This is the reason for our insisting on as close an approach to fasting as is possible, where absolute fasting seems inadvisable or impossible. Tender cocoanut water, dilute fruit juice, or thin soup of non-starchy vegetables may thus be used. Herbal juices with a little lime juice diluted in water will be medicinal. Potatoes and similar starchy vegetables are not proper for making soup. There should be an interval of four to six hours between feedings, and the feeding programme must begin after some hours of complete fasting in the morning.

IN CHRONIC DISEASE

Why do chronic diseases arise at all? The Nature-Cure answer to this is as follows.

These diseases arise usually at a later stage in life, in patients who had passed through a series of acute disease, under allopathic treatments, and survived them. These medical treatments consist in the fighting the imaginary entity, the disease, by means of poisonous drugs, and in weakening the Vital Force still further by means of unwanted food. We have seen that the drugs are really aimed at Life

itself. Thus in both ways Nature's effort to eliminate foreign matter is successfully thwarted. The medico does not tell the patient to reform his ways even after the illness. So the latter continues to live in the same way as before, thereby adding to his encumbrances of foreign matter. His Vital Force is now weaker than it was before, because of the retained drugs—which often gets lodged in the nervous system or other vital organs or both—and by the greatly enhanced load of foreign matter. In these conditions Life can initiate only mild and weak efforts to expel the foreign matter, and these tend to drag on slowly and for a long time, like guerilla warfare. These are therefore called chronic diseases. These would be very rare indeed in the cases of those who get through their diseases in a natural way, without those two mistakes being committed. The point that the reader should take note of is that the effort of Life is towards Health—that Life does not cease to make efforts to expel the foreign matter, even after being defeated by the allopath again and again. But its efforts are proportionate to its now reduced powers.

Since the vital effort is weak the diseases appear to be mild and trifling. The patient and his doctor may both look upon them as negligible. On the other hand acute diseases are

considered to be more serious. Their seriousness is mostly on the surface. Inwardly they are not serious, because as a rule the encumbrances are much lighter in those cases, while the encumbrances in chronic cases are many times heavier. Hence chronic diseases are inwardly more serious and their cure is more difficult.

For chronic diseases the medicos have only what is called symptomatic treatment. This treatment injures the patient and reduces still further the remnant of Health he has. A time comes when even this symptomatic treatment ceases to be effective. The symptoms become more obstinate and permanent. Or the disease changes to something still more chronic and serious.

Because the disease is mild, a degree of apparent health is found to persist, and the usual biological functions, digestion, the passing of stools and the rest, go on, but on a lower level of efficiency. In such a state of health, even fasting does not avail to rouse the Vital Force to a serious and sustained effort to restore positive Health. And this would be so for some long period, during which natural measures to improve the bodily condition will have to be systematically carried out. Meanwhile no long fasts should be undertaken. But short fasts of

not more than three days at a time, taken at intervals, will go a great way to lighten the encumbrances and to improve health. In the intervals between fastings the patient must steer a middle course between his previous customary plan of two heavy meals a day, and the complete fast. That is he must restrict himself to one meal a day. Eating two meals a day will only confirm his disease and in the long run make it nearly or wholly incurable. For that will not be Vital Economy, but vital extravagance. Such extravagance will lead him on surely, though slowly, to the third stage of disease, the destructive. So he must economise his vital power by eating less often, and less each time, every day giving to his digestive organs a definite period of rest. This rest to the organs is something in the nature of daily fasting. This fasting may be effected either by foregoing the breakfast or the supper.

Another defect in the body in the chronic case is that the blood and the tissues are greatly depleted of their necessary alkaline constituents, due to the persistent eating of highly nutritious, negative foods. This cannot be corrected by the eating of balanced diets, but only by the eating of highly positive diets, consisting chiefly of foods that had been neglected in the past. Details of this aspect of

the cure should be looked for in *Practical Nature-Cure*.

This programme of positive dieting with occasional fastings will so purify and lighten the body as to increase the Vital power to the extent necessary for starting acute diseases. These are called curative crises, because they are, in Nature's intention, steps towards better health and the radical cure of chronic disease. These, as and when they arise, should be welcomed and treated naturally, as acute diseases, by fasting and other suitable measures. After the cure the patient must live the Life Natural, to stay cured. If even during this stage the sufferer remains dependent upon medical people, the inevitable consequence will be that he will—if he lives long enough—be landed in the third and last stage of disease, the destructive. In this stage the process of decay and destruction proceeds at a more rapid rate than that of repair and renewal. This is due to the bodycells being invaded by foreign matter, which not only envelops them, but also enters into them, thus preventing their efforts to become clean and strong again. Therefore the diseases that now arise tend inexorably towards death. Nature, it would seem, is now seeking to end what can be no more mended.

IN DESTRUCTIVE DISEASE

When this stage is reached, the Vital Power is at a low level, and the corruption of the tissues,—due to the loss of the vitalising alkaline salts that safeguard bodily purity and help to keep up positive health—has proceeded so far that the foreign matter has accumulated rapidly. This consists chiefly of slimy wastes of an acid nature, which gets into the tissues and permeates them through and through. It appears that many of these diseases are considered by allopaths to be acute ones; This is a mistake. But even in this stage Nature—the Power behind Life—can and often does reverse the course of events, and confers a new lease of life, with health of some degree.

Here also, as in chronic diseases, there is the problem of how to stay cured after the cure is attained. This means that the patient must once for all bid good bye to his medical care-takers and become his own doctor. He must resolve to Return to Nature finally and irrevocably and to live according to Her laws always, obeying the laws of Health-Culture and of Cure, considering them as parts of one indivisible whole.

It was remarked by a Nature-Curist, who was practising according to Louis Kuhne's New

Science of Healing "Our failures are in consumption." This is perfectly true in respect of Kuhne's system. The reason is not far to seek. There is nowhere in his book a clear statement of the great Law of Vital Economy. Nor has he given instructions as to how, in his opinion, consumptives should be fed. This great law has not been sufficiently clearly enunciated in any book written by the great pioneers of the West. But it is implicit in the writings of some of them, especially Dr. Dewey and Dr. Page of America. It has been possible for this writer to arrive at an objective understanding of the Law, to state it in intelligible terms, and to set forth the practical rules of conduct—in health and cure—that are derived from it.

It should be understood that without a strict application of the principle of Vital Economy, no consumptive, nor any other sufferer from destructive disease, can be cured and given a new lease of life. Whoever has been cured has been saved chiefly by Vital Economy.

The medicos seek to cure their patients by giving all the nourishment that the patient can be induced to take. Since consumption is a 'wasting' disease, it seems to them that the wasting must be more than made good by building up flesh. This plan seems to succeed

for a time. The patient puts on weight. Often he feels that he has not improved. But he is told that he is being cured, and he believes it. But this stuffing process wastes the vital power, and soon there is a breakdown and a loss of weight. At this stage the doctor in the Sanitarium discharges the patient and sends him home, where he dies in a few months. What these doctors could not understand is that what cures a patient is not what is put into him, but his own vital power.

This allopathic plan has been adopted by a good many professionals practising Nature-Cure, and they prescribe two substantial meals a day, of nourishing food, besides other diet. These men have a vague notion that certain diets are wholesome. But the wholesomeness of diets is always relative to the patient. Both the quality and the quantity must be adjusted to the amount of vital power that can safely be spared for digestion. If too much of the vital power be given over to digestion, the balance of vital power would certainly not be sufficient to effect the cure of the disease. Even in a chronic case it is the rule not to allow more than one meal a day. Even that much would be unsuitable in a destructive case. Besides, the diet needs to be made chiefly medicinal; its nutritive value must be very little indeed,

because nutrition is for the time being not needed, and healthful nutrition—building up—does not become possible till at a later stage in the cure.

The following story—reproduced from memory from an excellent book by an American, Dr. C. E. Page—is a typical example of how consumptives can be cured, and shows the great importance of Vital Economy in all such cases. A girl of nineteen years of age had been attending on her mother, who was ill with consumption, and was treated medically. The mother died. The daughter, who must have inherited some constitutional weakness from the mother, and whose vital powers had been overtaxed by attending on her during the illness, herself took the disease. A doctor was called to see her. After he had examined her, he was taken aside by the father, and the two were talking about the patient. The doctor expressed his conviction that the patient could not outlive three months, and was unwilling to take up the case. The father was pressing him to do so. The patient was listening to the whole talk. She then called them both and told the doctor that she did not want him to treat her. After he had gone she told her father that she was going to treat herself. She

had read some stray printed sheet, giving a common sense plan for the cure of consumption, she demanded complete freedom to try it on herself and got it. The next morning she was taken on her cot to the garden, where she lay in the open. Now and then with a stick she dug the ground for some time and then rested, this plan she followed the whole day, taking no food. In the evening she had some hunger, and ate a very little of some simple food that she fancied. This regime she followed steadily for weeks, and gradually gained an increase of digestive power. The disease subsided completely in less than the three months the doctor had allowed her. She then had the doctor called again and lectured him on the right way to treat consumptives. The doctor agreed that she was quite right, but explained that if he tried to treat ignorant patients on those lines he would be ruined, because the people would give him a bad name and no one would employ him. That is true to this day.

In the treatment followed by the patient in this story there was some exercise. But what patients in this condition need most is Rest. Any exercise taken must be according to personal inclination and not inimical to Vital Economy. For it is chiefly Vital Economy that brings the cure. Diet of a remedial quality—

rich in the alkaline organic salts and vitamins—is the next in importance. Sunlight and pure air are also necessary to ensure a cure. The amount of food taken each time must be very little, just so little as to satisfy the hunger. To guard against the lure of appetite, the food chosen must be non-appetising. Even that must be eaten in predetermined rations and chewed well. Some part of the day must be spent in fasting—preferably the morning hours. It would be good for the patient to know all about Hunger and how to recognise it,* so that each time he may wait till it comes and then eat the minimum needed. Appetite is the greatest foe of both Health and Cure. One kind of food at a time should be enough. If there is no improvement in the condition, it is a sign that the food should be made less.

In this context a bit of personal experience will be instructive. At one time I happened to suffer a sudden breakdown of vital power. This was some time between 1914 and 1920. It occurred to me that I should stop eating the usual food, and go upon a mono-diet of tender cocoanut water. Very soon there was improvement. After a fortnight I found it necessary to continue the special dieting, but found the

* These points are fully dealt with in chapter V of Practical Nature-Cure.

tender coconuts too costly. So I chose to live on bananas and raw milk. At first I took about a pint of milk and four bananas, each time, taking two meals a day. In a few days I found myself getting worse. I reduced the rations by half and continued the diet for about six months. The results were excellent.

In the treatment of case No. 6, which is narrated in the first part the principle of Vital Economy was fairly well observed, though at the time the principle was only vaguely understood by me. The progress of the case well illustrates the great importance of this principle.

In every other case treated by me the patients were more sensible and strictly followed the instructions. In a case in Gonda in the U.P. the patient took only one teacupful of fresh goat's milk once a day, and at other times only such very light and positive diet as dilute fruit-juice or vegetable soup.

There is a great difference in the different articles of diet that are available. Some are just nutritive—rich in protein, starch and the like—while others are poor in these elements, but rich in the alkaline salts and vitamins. The former if taken in the least excess would greatly retard the cure or bar it altogether. The latter

would help the cure, by combining with the foreign matter and making it soluble in water. Nourishing food is given by doctors to prevent the emaciation that is a feature of the disease. This ought not to be attempted. The proper time to build up is after some improvement is won.

There was a case of consumption in Lyallpur (Punjab), in which the principle of Vital Economy was the means of curing the patient. The previous treatment, which was allopathic, was a failure. Directions for treatment were sent by post. The diet consisted of very light rations of foods such as butter-milk and fruits. Milk was prohibited in this case. Once during the course of the treatment the patient's husband wrote expressing a doubt as to whether the diet was sufficient to counteract the wasting effect of the disease; he appealed to the medical practice, in which a generous diet was always given. I pointed out in my reply that if the medical plan was the right one it would have cured the patient. As it did not do so it was reasonable to suspect that it was wrong, and to try the opposite plan. He was convinced and carried out the treatment correctly until there was a great improvement. The cure was completed by a fast of eleven days.

The same principles govern the cure of every kind of destructive disease.

Strange as it may seem, it is true to say that what cures the patient is not so much what he takes into himself, but rather what he refrains from taking—which if taken would have robbed him of his vitality and barred his way to a cure. Food, air, sunlight and water are aids to the cure, but what cures is the Vital Power alone. If this is well understood then the one great obstacle to the cure of these diseases is known and can be avoided. Thus a great many patients—who now die—can be saved

APPENDIX

The allegorical story referred to in the footnote on page 88 which is given hereunder, will show the complete dependence of all the functions of the living body upon Life, which is called the Mukhya Prana or simply Prana. It has to be explained to the reader that there are ten different functions, each of which is called a Prana, which are concerned in this allegory. There are also five other functions, which are distinctly mentioned in the books, namely Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana; but these are here subsumed as one, as Prana. Because

of the supremacy of this one, it is sometimes named the Mukhya Prana or Chief Prana. Thus there are eleven pranas concerned in this story, which is as follows.

Among these eleven pranas there was a dispute as to which of them was the greatest of them all. They were not able to agree among themselves. So they went for a decision to the Creator. He told them to settle the dispute among themselves by finding out that one among them, whose going out would result in the going out of all of them. Then the test was made. One by one each of the pranas went out, remained away for a year and then returned. But life went on all the time. At last the turn of the Chief Prana came, and it began to leave. But at the same time all the others were being pulled out, they could not remain apart from the chief Prana. So they all unanimously begged it not to leave, admitting its superiority to them all. This is just a dramatic presentation of the plain fact that all bodily functions and faculties are really the functions and faculties of Life itself, and not independent of it. Nature-Cure is based on the recognition of this truth. And Nature-Cure is successful only because this is true.

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